

# **Higher Learning Commission Year Four Assurance Argument**



## Introduction

---

In 1870, Colorado State University was founded as a land-grant institution and has consistently exemplified the spirit of the Morrill Act throughout the decades.

The University was first accredited by the North Central Association (NCA) in 1925 and has been continually accredited since then. The institution's last comprehensive peer review was conducted in November 2013, using the Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality (PEAQ) process and associated criteria. In January 2014, the Higher Learning Commission reaffirmed CSU's accreditation finding full institutional compliance with each criterion. As a high functioning and stable institution, CSU then opted to participate in the Open Pathway to maintain accreditation. The Open Pathway Year 4 Assurance Argument affirms the institution's continued compliance with the accreditation criteria and focuses on updates since the last comprehensive visit.

The University Strategic Plan was refreshed in 2016. The plan is organized around five broad objectives that, not coincidentally, reflect the priorities found throughout the Open Pathways criterion.

- CSU will champion student success
- CSU will make a global impact and translate discoveries into products of knowledge, creative artistry, and innovation
- CSU will engage with people and communities to solve problems, share knowledge, and support progress
- CSU will be a rewarding, inspiring, productive, and inclusive community for all employees and enhance faculty as its foundation
- CSU will be accountable, sustainable, and responsible

## 1 - Mission

---

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

### 1.A - Core Component 1.A

---

The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.
2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. (This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)

## Argument

---

### 1.A.1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.

The [mission of the institution](#) is unchanged since the last comprehensive visit and articulated in Colorado Revised Statutes Title 23 Article 31. "Colorado State University shall be a comprehensive graduate research university with selective admission standards offering a comprehensive array of baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degree programs. Consistent with the tradition of land-grant universities, Colorado State University has exclusive authority to offer graduate and undergraduate programs in agriculture, forestry, natural resources and veterinary medicine". Also by statute, there are four agencies of the state assigned to CSU: the Colorado Agricultural Experiment Station, Extension, the Colorado State Forest Service, and the Colorado Water Institute.

As stated in the [General Catalog](#), the statutory mission serves as the foundation for the strategic mission statement approved by the Board of Governors in 2005, which states that "Inspired by its land-grant heritage, Colorado State University is committed to excellence, setting the standard for public research universities in teaching, research, service and extension for the benefit of the citizens of Colorado, the United States and the world"

The following values guide its activities:

- Be accountable
- Promote civic responsibility
- Employ a customer focus
- Promote freedom of expression
- Demonstrate inclusiveness and diversity

- Encourage and reward innovation
- Act with integrity and mutual respect
- Provide opportunity and access
- Support excellence in teaching and research

Since the 2013 comprehensive visit, the President's Cabinet endorsed [The Principles of Community](#). The Principles are the result of more than a year of campus dialogue and debate with a broad range of constituency groups providing input. Each member of the CSU community has a responsibility to uphold these principles when engaging with one another or acting on behalf of the University. The Principles of Community are as follows:

- Inclusion: We create and nurture inclusive environments and welcome, value and affirm all members of our community, including their various identities, skills, ideas, talents and contributions.
- Integrity: We are accountable for our actions and will act ethically and honestly in all our interactions.
- Respect: We honor the inherent dignity of all people within an environment where we are committed to freedom of expression, critical discourse and the advancement of knowledge.
- Service: We are responsible, individually and collectively, to give of our time, talents and resources to promote the well-being of each other and the development of our local, regional and global communities.
- Social Justice: We have the right to be treated and the responsibility to treat others with fairness and equity, the duty to challenge prejudice, and to uphold the laws, policies and procedures that promote justice in all respects.

#### **1.A.2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.**

##### Academic Programs

In accordance with state statute and as detailed in the [Official List of Colleges, Departments, Majors, Minors and Degrees](#), CSU offers Bachelor's degrees in 74 fields, Graduate Certificates in 40 fields, Master's and Professional degrees in 86 fields, Doctoral degrees in 51 fields and the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree. Degree programs are offered through six interdisciplinary Special Academic Units and 53 academic departments/schools within eight colleges.

##### Student Support Services

The [Division of Student Affairs](#) accepts primary responsibility for student support services by fostering a campus community that supports students to develop their unique potential and, inspire them to be active learners, successful graduates and engaged global citizens. Programs and activities within the Division reflect a deep understanding of student development, evidence-based best practices and a commitment to inclusive excellence.

The broad scope and impact of the Division is detailed in its [annual report](#) and includes services related to student health and well-being, campus life, recreation, the Lory Student Center, housing and dining, safety, academic support, learning communities and diversity programs. The annual

report illustrates the explicit alignment of the Division's goals with the University Strategic Plan. Further, it includes program outcomes and details of the leadership role the Division has in student learning. The connection between student and academic affairs in service to student success has been recognized as an exemplary model by the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities ([2017 finalist for the Institutional Strategies for Degree Completion Award](#)).

### Enrollment Profile

The enrollment profile of CSU students is consistent with the institutional mission as evidenced in the [Enrollment Book](#), the [Fact Book](#) and the [Freshman Profile](#). The fall 2017 total headcount was 33,413 with state supported (RI) headcount at 28,446. The entering class was the largest and most diverse in the institution's history 27% minority; 22% first-generation; 68% Colorado residents and nearly one in four were Pell Grant recipients. The rates of diversity continue to increase demonstrating an ongoing commitment to this important aspect of campus.

CSU has been assigned selective admissions standards by state statute, which establish that most students admitted should have a [101 index score](#) or above (a score calculated by a sliding-scale combination of GPA or class rank with ACT/SAT score). However, the 101 index is not absolute. The [holistic application review](#) ensures that admission is denied to an applicant who does not show sufficient readiness (even with an index score at or above 101) and granted to applicants that present with an index lower than 101 who demonstrate the potential for success provided that (a) the number of such students does not exceed 20% as part of a state-wide aggregation of all baccalaureate institutions and (b) that CSU's offers of admission to students below 91 do not account for more than 1% of all offers of admission for the cohort.

### **1.A.3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. (This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)**

See Criterion 5.C.1.

## **Sources**

---

- APLU Project Degree Completion Award Finalists
- CDHE Index Matrix
- Curricular Policies & Procedures Handbook
- Enrollment Book
- Fact Book
- Freshman Profile
- Holistic Application Review
- Official List of Colleges, Departments, Degrees, Majors and Minors
- Principles of Community Statement
- Roles and Missions - Colorado Department of Higher Education
- Student Affairs Annual Report
- VPSA Organizational Chart

## 1.B - Core Component 1.B

---

The mission is articulated publicly.

1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.
2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

### Argument

---

**1.B.1 The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.**

CSU's Mission is prominently publicized online and in major publications such as the [General Catalog](#) and the [Institutional Profile](#). It can also be accessed using the A-Z web index. President Frank's speeches often mention the overall mission of a land-grant institution in which CSU is deeply rooted and from which it derives inspiration.

**1.B.2 The mission document(s) are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.**

CSU's Vision, Mission and Values Statement was formally reaffirmed by the Board of Governors and reviewed most recently in 2015 as part of the University's strategic plan refresh process. The [University Strategic Plan](#) outlines the institution's major priorities within the mission and is organized around objectives that reflect teaching and learning, research and discovery, engagement and service and inclusive excellence. From this university-level outline, administrative divisions, colleges, departments and specialized units are encouraged to develop unit plans that scaffold up to support the University. The institution uses the Campus Labs Compliance Assist tool to support planning efforts.

**1.B.3 The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.**

In accordance with state statute, CSU is expected to deliver a comprehensive array of baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degree programs. The nature and scope of this university-level statement of the educational mission is elaborated through the unit, college and department strategic plans.

## Sources

---

- Institutional Profile
- Official List of Colleges, Departments, Degrees, Majors and Minors
- University Strategic Plan

## 1.C - Core Component 1.C

---

The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.
2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

## Argument

---

### 1.C.1 The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.

As noted in the final report from the review team in 2014, CSU had (and still does have) opportunities to increase diversity on campus. Below is an update of how the institution is attempting to do so.

#### Office of the President

- In 2015, Colorado State students, staff and faculty rallied in support of their peers at the University of Missouri who were speaking out against racially motivated violence and discrimination. CSU President, Tony Frank joined the march that day, and left with a list of student recommendations about how to improve support of diverse populations. In response, President Frank formed the President's [Commission on Diversity and Inclusion](#) to serve as the institutional conscience for inclusive policies, programs, procedures, and services. The Commission is a catalyst for change that enhances the campus climate for all people and removes persistent barriers that inhibit the success of the campus community, especially students and employees from minoritized populations. The Commission holds the University accountable for promoting inclusion, integrity, respect, service, and social justice, which are the tenets of the Principles of Community. [Membership](#) of the Commission comprises representation from every college, division, employee council and targeted student organization.
- The President's Multicultural Student Advisory Committee (PMSAC) has been an active student leadership group since the mid-1990s. This group of approximately 20 students, appointed by the president, includes representation from all the campus cultural and resource centers, International Programs, Athletics, and Adult Learner and Veterans Services. These students meet twice monthly with campus leadership and advise the president on issues related to improving the climate for underrepresented populations. In 2018, PMSAC organized the [CSUnite No Place for Hate](#) event to show campus wide

solidarity in opposition to acts of hate and intimidation that had recently occurred on campus. More than 3,000 students, faculty, staff, and community members participated in the event.

- The President led the formation of the Women and Gender Collaborative as part of ongoing efforts to advance women and gender equity at CSU. The Collaborative operated as a pilot for two years under the Office of the President and will move under the Vice President for Diversity in summer 2018, with the Director becoming an AVP for Diversity.
- The President's Commission on Women and Gender Equity celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary at Colorado State in 2017-18 and continues to advise the President on issues related to the climate for women students, staff, and faculty.
- In the face of incidents of racial bias, President Frank has adopted a standard of transparency that includes open communication with campus when such incidents occur. While such incidents occur at universities around the country, Colorado State is an outlier in its commitment to transparency and alerting the campus about them. Reported bias incidents are posted on CSU's Public Safety website and shared with the entire campus community.

#### Office of the Vice President for Diversity

The Office of the Vice President for Diversity was created in 2010 and has grown to include three associate vice presidents as well as additional programming and support staff. The office oversees campus-wide diversity planning and training, the annual Diversity Symposium, and the work of the President's Commission on Diversity and Inclusion. The office also led the adoption of CSU's Principles of Community, now in wide use across campus.

For 17 years, the annual Diversity Symposium has been expanded to offer sessions with leaders in the diversity and inclusion space. The Diversity Symposium is open to the public, not just the CSU community, and has steadily grown in attendance.

The [Inclusive Physical and Virtual Campus policy](#), approved by the CSU President's Cabinet in 2016, states and affirms CSU's commitment to creating and sustaining a welcoming, accessible, and inclusive campus. Inclusive physical and virtual design enhances usability for everyone and helps create an environment in which we support, protect, and respect rich dimensions of diversity. Part of the effort to create an accessible campus included the purchase of mapping software (housed in Facilities Management) to assess barriers and locations of specific accommodations.

In 2017, the [Hiring Subcommittee](#) of the President's Commission on Diversity and Inclusion provided Cabinet with detailed recommendations aimed at increasing the percentage of faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds. Those recommendations included the hiring of professional Equal Opportunity Coordinators to sit on every search committee (currently a faculty/staff service to the campus) as well as changes in advertising protocol to influence the diversity of the hiring pool.

Further recent evidence of CSU's commitment to diversity and inclusion includes:

- Development of an online [bias reporting](#) process res for faculty, staff, and students to use to report issues pertaining to individual experiences of bias at CSU.



- Development of a communications plan from the President's Commission on Diversity and Inclusion to more effectively communicate the University's ongoing commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Development and implementation of a six point [Diversity and Inclusion Blueprint](#).

#### Division of Academic Affairs

See Criterion 3.B.4.

#### Division of Student Affairs

Within the Division of Student Affairs, there are four cultural centers (Asian Pacific American Cultural Center, Black/African American Cultural Center, El Centro and Native American Cultural Center), the Pride Resource Center, Resources for Disabled Students and the Women and Gender Advocacy Center under the umbrella of [Student Diversity Programs and Services](#) (SDPS). All centers are charged to provide support services to students and contribute to a diverse campus environment. The services and programs are available to benefit all CSU students. Details about the work of the SDPS are available in the Division of Student Affairs' annual report and in individual program reviews.

Understanding that diversity transcends race, there are many other recent initiatives that have been impactful:

- The Safe Zone program out of the Pride Resource Center has been very successful and highly sought out as a resource for faculty and staff.
- Feminine hygiene products were made more readily accessible across campus addressing equity issue based on gender and class.
- The Gender Identity Task Force addressed better support for students self-identifying gender on all institutional documents (Ram Card, class rosters, in Aries, etc.).
- Resources for Disabled Students moved to The Institute for Learning and Teaching building which is located closer to Occupational Therapy and the Assistive Technology Resources Center.
- The Provost's Office provided funding for an additional victim advocate position to support survivors of interpersonal violence through the Women and Gender Advocacy Center.

SDPS students and staff are also integrated into the implementation of the second version of CSU's Student Success Initiative ([SSI-2](#)). The goals of SSI-2 are to increase graduation rates and close attainment gaps. Neither goal can be attained without leveraging the expertise of the SDPS offices to help faculty and other staff increase campus inclusivity.

#### Office of International Programs

All undergraduate students complete a Global and Cultural Awareness requirement within the [AUCC](#) general education curriculum. Students have access to a wide range of academic offerings to complete this requirement, including International Education (IE) courses and [Education Abroad](#) experiences offered by the Office of International Programs (OIP). These

experiences include Study Abroad, [International Exchange](#), international internships and shorter experiences within otherwise traditional courses.

Student participation in Education Abroad has grown significantly in recent years, bolstered by CSU's commitment to participate in the landmark [Generation Study Abroad Initiative](#) led by the Institute for International Education. A recently launched partnership with [Semester at Sea](#), which includes \$300,000 annual need-based grants for CSU students and the opening of the [Todos Santos Center in Mexico](#) provide additional opportunities for CSU students to engage in international experiences. CSU, in partnership with International Studies Abroad, is developing a new Community of Practice to help ensure that new faculty-led Education Abroad programs are developed with student diversity and inclusivity as a core principle of each experience. A program designed to provide free passports to students, as well as special overseas opportunities designed for students with marginalized identities has also been developed to expand access and increase inclusion in Education Abroad. Tied to this are more than \$450,000 in Education Abroad scholarships CSU students received last year, which includes the Global Access Award specifically targeted at first- generation college students.

Leading efforts to internationalize campus, OIP organized the [Confucius Institute](#) at Colorado State University in partnership with Hanban and colleagues at Hunan University in Changsha, China. The institute seeks to provide Chinese language training and cultural programming to the broader Fort Collins community with a special focus on water and environmental sustainability.

#### Office of the Vice President for Research

CSU faculty and researchers regularly engage in scholarship in partnership with governments and universities worldwide and regularly receive [international recognition](#). CSU recently launched two efforts to more effectively monitor the international activities of faculty. [Digital Measures](#), a campus-wide faculty reporting system, provides comprehensive information on the international work of faculty members. Additionally, the Global Engagement Directory monitors formal partnerships, sabbaticals, and funded research of CSU faculty and researchers. CSU currently has 225 formal connections in 57 countries and a significant number of other informal working relationships worldwide. CSU is enhancing the international efforts of faculty through these new data management and communications tools.

#### Office of Engagement

CSU is a world leader in expanding the land-grant mission of extension to partners around the world. The institution has played a special role in China and East Africa, helping government ministries and agricultural universities create opportunities and policies for greater collaboration. CSU faculty, students and Extension staff have worked closely with universities in these areas to extend research and best practices collaboratively into local communities, with a special emphasis on agricultural production and to cross-train CSU students and Extension agents in cross-cultural communication and collaboration.

The China initiative involves 39 universities in China with agricultural programs as designated by the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology. These efforts are in line with CSU's strategic

plan, which encourages global impact and the translation of discoveries into products of knowledge, creative artistry and innovation. This cross-cultural development and modernization could lead to advanced technology transfers, creating opportunities for both China and the U.S., especially in the field of agriculture as the development of more effective and efficient transfer of agricultural products and food system technologies emerge.

The partnership has three primary components:

- Joint research undertaken by CSU and AAU Extension programs.
- Student exchanges: A 2+2 undergraduate degree program for students who intend to study at both universities.
- Faculty/Academic exchange for semester or year-long research opportunities in host departments for visiting scholars.

**1.C.2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.**

As Colorado's land grant institution, CSU has the responsibility to attend to human diversity in Colorado and beyond its borders. That responsibility underpins the Student Success Initiatives ([SSI](#) and [SSI-2](#)). The university strives to reflect that diversity in the student and employee composition and the inclusive climate on campus.

Employees

In the 2016 Campus Climate Survey, 64% percent of employee respondents indicated CSU's climate is becoming consistently more inclusive and 67% agree that CSU recruits employees from a diverse set of backgrounds. This represents an increase from 2014 (58% and 57% respectively).

Processes and activities that provide evidence of institutional commitment to diversity and an inclusive culture are found across campus and include:

- Mandatory supervisor training with a focus on diversity and inclusion.
- Salary equity analyses (between group and individual).
- Affirmative action utilization and placement analyses.
- Affirmative Action Plans.

Students

Currently, 21.1% of the student body self-report as a domestic minoritized student. This is an increase of 4.7 percentage points since the last comprehensive HLC review. The diversity of the incoming class is even higher at 27.2%; a 6.7 percentage point increase. But, there is still work to be done. Student demographics do not yet mirror the demographics of Colorado's college-ready high school graduates. There are significant discussions in the Division of Enrollment and Access, the Strategic Enrollment Management Team, the Division of Academic Affairs and the Division of Student Affairs to continue to increase diverse student representation on campus.

The initial [Student Success Initiative \(SSI\)](#) prioritized the elimination of attainment gaps and this continues to be a priority in the current version ([SSI-2](#)). SSI called for eliminating attainment gaps AFTER accounting for prior academic preparation. SSI-2 calls for eliminating attainment gaps absolutely (without regard for prior academic preparation). Recommended strategies in SSI-2 include expansion of pre-collegiate programs, continuing the holistic application review that honors the whole person, increasing the sustainability of the Community for Excellence, expanding Key Learning Communities, leveraging the knowledge within the Student Diversity Programs and Services offices and intentionally weaving diverse perspectives into the curriculum of every academic program.

## Sources

---

- AUCC Curriculum
- Bias Reporting
- CDI Hiring Subcommittee
- Commission on Diversity and Inclusion Mission
- Commission on Diversity and Inclusion Organizational Chart
- Confucius Institute
- CSUnite
- Digital Measures Activity System
- Diversity Blueprint
- Diversity Symposium
- Education Abroad Handbook
- Employee Campus Climate Survey Executive Summary
- Enrollment Book
- Exchange Partners
- Generation Study Abroad Initiative
- Inclusive Physical and Virtual Campus Policy
- Institutional Diversity Blueprint
- Office of the VP Research
- Semester at Sea
- SSI Final Report
- SSI-2 Plan
- Student Diversity Programs and Services
- Student Recommendations on Diversity
- Todos Santos Program Report
- University Strategic Plan

## 1.D - Core Component 1.D

---

The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

## Argument

---

### **1.D.1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.**

The CSU mission clearly declares that the institution serves "for the benefit of the citizens of Colorado, the United States and the world." Goals 5 and 6 of the [University Strategic Plan](#) delineate current initiatives related to engagement, public interactions and strategic partnerships such as the National Western Center Partnership, Engagement Hubs, China and Africa Extension relationships and economic development efforts locally, regionally and state-wide. Units with externally facing missions include CSU Online, CSU Extension, the Colorado Water Institute, Agricultural Experiment Stations and the Colorado State Forest Service. In 2017, CSU joined with Arapahoe Community College (ACC) and the Douglas County School District in The Collaborative Educational Campus to facilitate student movement from high school through ACC and CSU or other four-year universities. CSU is currently partnered with Adams State University, located in rural Colorado, to bring a scientific emphasis to their agricultural degree program.

Engaged, public-oriented work is embedded throughout all eight colleges, as evidenced by CSU's current Carnegie community engagement classification.

### **1.D.2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests (Identical component as 5.A.2).**

See Criterion 1.A.3 and 5.A.2.

### **1.D.3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.**

CSU engages with its external constituents to learn about the issues they face, their goals and their needs. This responsibility is led by the Division of Engagement but is fulfilled across the institution and is documented and assessed through a variety of internal and external review processes. These include the Carnegie engaged university classification, the inclusion of engagement work in college program review materials and the review of engaged faculty work toward promotion and tenure by the Vice President for Engagement.

In recognition of its strong commitment to economic engagement, Colorado State University was designated as an [Innovation & Economic Prosperity \(IEP\) University](#) by the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities in July 2016. The designation recognizes public research universities working with public and private sector partners in their states and regions to support economic development through a variety of activities, including innovation and entrepreneurship, technology transfer, talent and workforce development, and community development. Three case studies were recognized; The School of Global and Environmental Sustainability; CSU spinoff Envirofit; and the Powerhouse Energy Campus.

The [Provost's Council for Engagement](#) was created as a recommendation from the IEP process, and includes representatives from all eight colleges and the Morgan Library who were nominated by their respective deans because of their engaged scholarship. This Council works to advise the institution on policy changes related to opportunities, to incentives, to partnerships, and to student involvement, with a goal of leveraging cross-disciplinary engagement initiatives.

[CSU Extension](#) is designed to meet the needs of each of Colorado's 64 counties and delivers community development and university-based information and education, including 4-H youth development, nutrition and Master Gardener programs. The annual survey of county commissioners regarding CSU Extension services is one of four key performance assessment metrics mandated by the CSU Board of Governors for the CSU President.

The [Colorado Agricultural Experiment Station](#) conducts site-specific research on agriculture and related issues through its eight research centers. Last spring the Colorado Legislature approved \$875,000 in new base funding in support of CSU's vision for greater engagement in western Colorado and the eastern plains. This funding allows a combined \$11.65 million investment in infrastructure improvements, such as new buildings and other facilities, at the two centers through debt financing.

The 17 district offices of the Colorado State Forest Service provide forest landowners with information and technical assistance on forest management, wildfire protection, urban and community forestry and conservation education. The Colorado Forest Restoration Institute serves as a bridging organization among researchers, land managers, and communities dedicated to advancing knowledge and practice of forest restoration and wildfire hazard reduction in the central Rocky Mountain region.

CSU Online delivers the University's academic excellence in flexible formats and is charged with creating a platform for CSU's contribution to lifelong learning opportunities. In FY17, 1,913 students enrolled in noncredit courses; 1,042 enrolled in contract courses; 2,236 were enrolled in credit-bearing courses but were non-degree seeking; and 5,232 were enrolled in courses working toward a CSU degree. CSU Online operations are detailed throughout the assurance argument.

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Colorado State University is a community of active adults who are enthusiastic about the pursuit of lifelong learning. Offerings include quality courses and educational opportunities for members ages 50 and better to explore fresh insights, stay current on important topics and meet new people. In 2010, the Bernard Osher Foundation awarded Colorado State University a \$1 million endowment.



The Center for Collaborative Conservation manages research-for-action projects in Colorado, the western states, and international sites including Mongolia and East Africa.

The Center for Environmental Management of Military Lands is a leading provider of research and sustainable management of natural and cultural resources across the U.S. at more than 40 military installations, Department of Defense headquarters and field agencies.

The College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences operates the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratories on campus with branch laboratories in Grand Junction on the Western Slope and in Rocky Ford in the southeastern part of the state. Each year the laboratories conduct more than 300,000 tests on samples submitted from Colorado and 10 regional states, and serve as part of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network. The campus diagnostic laboratory has a national reputation for excellence in a number of areas, notably as the leader in testing for Chronic Wasting Disease (first discovered in Colorado).

The James L. Voss Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH) is a full-service referral veterinary medical center that provides an outstanding example of the synergy of teaching, research, and outreach. Clients come from across the nation to benefit from the high quality of animal health care and special services. Each year, more than 32,000 animal patients are attended in the VTH, which contributes to the education of approximately 135 graduates from the DVM program each year.

CSU promotes lifelong learning and college readiness through K-14 schools and their students as illustrated by the following examples:

- The Alliance Partnership Program, Upward Bound and other programs housed in the Access Center aim to increase the college-going rate of graduates from some of Colorado's economically disadvantaged high schools.
- The Energy Institute developed two energy curricula for Colorado teachers and informal educators - a Clean Energy Curriculum for Colorado middle and high schools and a Colorado Wind for Schools curriculum.
- The Native American Cultural Center and the Physics Department's Little Shop of Physics visit the Ute Mountain Ute Reservation, Southern Ute Indian Reservation, the Navajo Nation, and the Pine Ridge Reservation to promote the importance of science and education.
- The CSU STEM Center programs include after-school programs, summer programs, and STEM-centric school initiatives (Northern Colorado Math Oval, Little Shop of Physics, and the College of Natural Sciences Education & Outreach Center).
- The Environmental Learning Center encourages sustainable use of natural resources and the environment in K-12 and other community populations through summer camps, family programs, and other experiential learning opportunities.

The mission of the Alumni Association is to engage alumni in the life of the University. With more than 45 Ram Networks around the nation, alumni can engage with one another and the University in their local communities. The Alumni Association has reached record levels of membership and

giving. In 2017, it completed construction on the Iris and Michael Smith Alumni Center to serve as the on-campus home for alumni activities.

With a variety of leadership and community engagement programs, the Student Leadership, Involvement, and Community Engagement Office at CSU provides an important link between students and their surrounding communities which further demonstrates the university's commitment to the public good.

- Alternative Spring Break is an immersion experience into different cultural, environmental and socioeconomic communities across the nation built around the motto "See the world, Serve the World."
- Service Central provides assistance in identifying volunteer opportunities with local community agencies and nonprofits.
- TGIF pairs CSU student volunteers with teens in the community who have a variety of complex needs offering mutually beneficial relationships and learning for both teens and college student mentors.

## Sources

---

- Agricultural Experiment Stations
- Colorado State Forest Service Strategic Plan
- Extension Brochure
- Innovation and Economic Prosperity Designation
- Provost's Council for Engagement
- University Strategic Plan

## 1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

---

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

## Summary

---

### Assurance Evidence Summary

The evidence, both described and attached for review, affirms that CSU continues to meet the requirements of Criterion 1.

CSU has a publicly articulated mission that is adopted by the Board of Governors and guides every activity of the institution. It is reflected in the University Strategic Plan and in the budgeting priorities. Consistent with its status as a land-grant institution, CSU demonstrates a strong commitment to the public good (locally, regionally, nationally and globally), a foundational value of inclusivity and diversity, and authentic access for students through a holistic review process and student success initiatives to support students through graduation and beyond.



Updates since the last reaffirmation of accreditation include the following:

- Creation and adoption of the Principles of Community
- Increased focus on campus diversity, inclusivity and climate
- A refresh of the University Strategic Plan

The institutional mission is central to every objective area and goal of the University Strategic Plan.

## **2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct**

---

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

### **2.A - Core Component 2.A**

---

The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

#### **Argument**

---

CSU is committed to conducting its affairs transparently, ethically and in compliance with all laws, regulations, and University policies. The Office of Policy and Compliance maintains a centralized policy library, provides a consistent business practice for adopting and changing policies and facilitates transparent policy development that embraces the shared governance model of the University. It also provides resources to assist in reviewing and understanding compliance issues and helps foster business practices that comply with applicable laws, rules and regulations.

The [Research Integrity and Compliance Review Office](#) exists to protect the rights and welfare of research subjects, to provide guidance on research integrity issues, and to assist the research community in conducting and promoting responsible and ethical research. See Criterion 2.E.1.

The [Compliance Office of the Department of Athletics](#) is responsible for ensuring that all individuals who represent the institution's athletic programming comply with the rules and regulations set forth by Colorado State University, the Mountain West Conference, and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). CSU has never been sanctioned by the NCAA for a major violation. President Frank meets annually with Athletics staff and coaches to reinforce and reaffirm the expectation of ethical and responsible conduct, as well as compliance with NCAA regulations. The Compliance Office reports directly to Dr. Frank.

The Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) monitors and supports University compliance with federal and state laws and CSU policies prohibiting discrimination and harassment. Specifically, OEO maintains the following responsibilities:

- Develop and implement the University's affirmative action program (utilization and placement analyses for [faculty](#) and [staff](#) are attached).
- Oversee the [University's search and selection process](#) for all academic faculty and administrative professionals.
- Work in conjunction with Human Resource Services in the hiring process used for State Classified employees to ensure compliance with affirmative action and [nondiscrimination requirements](#).
- Conduct investigations and resolve complaints of discrimination and harassment in accordance with University procedures.
- Serve as a resource and provide assistance to units, departments and University constituencies regarding matters related to equal opportunity, affirmative action, access and non-discrimination.
- Provide education and training to faculty, staff and students on matters related to equal opportunity, discrimination and harassment.
- Coordinate University [compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act](#) and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.
- Collaborate with the Vice President for Diversity to cultivate awareness, appreciation and engagement with diversity and its relevance in a University environment.

The Office of Internal Audit is housed at a System level, not at an institutional level. The Office provides an independent appraisal of the University's internal controls and operations. It also provides consulting regarding risk management. In conjunction with the Internal Auditor and the Chancellor of the CSU System, the University provides campus wide communications about institutional expectations related to fiscal integrity, rules compliance, and research integrity.

The Compliance Reporting Hotline provides opportunity for employees, students, and constituents to report issues anonymously, in good faith, regarding compliance with laws, regulations, and substantive University policies, as well as other types of complaints and issues. The issues reported are first reviewed by the appropriate CSU System officials (Director of Internal Audit and Office of the General Counsel) to determine if further investigation or actions are warranted. University officials then can be brought into the review process to directly address the problem or concern. The University takes every allegation of illegal or unethical conduct seriously.

Financial integrity is described in Criterion 5.A.5.

Academic integrity is described in Criterion 2.E.3.

The Institute for Learning and Teaching contributes to the ongoing University-wide efforts through its Academic Integrity Program (AIP). AIP conducts [Academic Integrity Week](#) each fall and workshops for students and faculty. Additionally, it provides individual consultation and develops print and web-based resources supporting academic integrity. The program director, working in collaboration with other members of the campus community, also conducts assessments of campus behaviors and attitudes about academic integrity.

Expectations for ethical conduct are reflected the [Faculty and Administrative Professional Manual](#). A comprehensive and effective [Conflict of Interest Policy](#) is incorporated therein and a Conflict of

Interest Committee exists to review actual and apparent conflicts, review conflict management plans and make recommendations to the Provost/EVP for resolution. All employees in positions of trust, or who have access to sensitive data, financial records, sponsored programs funds or make business decisions are required to update their financial disclosures annually to help assure that conflicts are identified and acted upon in a timely manner with management plans implemented as appropriate. All employees are also required to adhere to I.T. security policies, FERPA and other policies and laws related to the ethical use of data.

State Classified personnel continue to be governed by the [Colorado Department of Personnel Board Rules and Administrative Procedures](#), which includes guidance on employee responsibilities and ethical behavior.

Academic departments have their own ethics codes that are updated periodically and reviewed during the program review process. For example, the Department of [Computer Science's Code of Ethics](#) reflects responsibilities of students, faculty and staff in addition to those enumerated in other University policies. Many non-academic departments have similar codes. Procurement Services has a [Code of Ethics](#) governing purchasing agents' responsibilities to the institution, the vendor community, and the people of the State of Colorado. Student government (ASCSU) has adopted a [Code of Ethics](#) that prohibits abuse of any student government position or office. These are just a few examples of locally imposed ethical codes and standards observed at the University.

The [Provost's Ethics Colloquium](#) promotes cross-disciplinary conversations about ethics-related issues. By highlighting existing ethics seminars and activities, encouraging additional events; and providing virtual resources, the Colloquium fosters increased interaction and collaboration among faculty and staff members working from ethical perspectives on issues facing the community. It also provides the broader Northern Colorado community a window into CSU. The Colloquium emphasizes ethical issues in academic professions and disciplines, particularly issues with larger social, civic, political, and economic implications.

Auxiliary enterprises at CSU (the Lory Student Center, Alumni Relations, the Career Center, Parking Services, Ram Welcome, Preview and Orientation, Housing and Dining Services, the Health Network, Campus Recreation etc.) operate with the same financial integrity expected of all operations. Each year, revenue/expenses are available online through the Office of Budgets. An account of their activities and impact is available in the [annual report](#) through the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.

The Associated Students of CSU (ASCSU) Student Fee Review Board strongly encourages each program/activity funded by student fees to have a Student Advisory Board for the purposes of evaluating the services provided and developing recommendations for new programs/services. Current board include the University Technology Fee Board, University Facility Fee Advisory Board, Alternative Transportation Fee Advisory Board, and the Campus Recreation Student Advisory Board.

The Board of Governors also has an [Ethics Policy](#) and [Conflict of Interest Policy](#).

## Sources

---

- Accommodations for Employees with Disabilities
- ASCSU Ethics Code
- Athletics Compliance
- Colorado Personnel Board Rules & Procedures
- Computer Science Code of Ethics
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Ethic Colloquium
- Faculty and Administrative Professional Manual
- Faculty and AP Search Manual
- How to File a Complaint
- Nondiscrimination Statement
- OEO Affirmative Action Faculty Analysis
- OEO Affirmative Action Staff Analysis
- Policy 107 CSUS Board Code of Ethics Policy
- Policy 108 CSUS Board Conflict of Interest Policy
- Procurement Code of Ethics
- Ramtegrity Week Archive – TILT
- RICRO
- Student Affairs Annual Report

## 2.B - Core Component 2.B

---

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

## Argument

---

CSU is committed to conducting its affairs transparently through shared governance, increased accountability and disclosure. This culture is evidenced by the following examples:

- The [Accountability website](#) includes information on finances, research, and a downloadable faculty/staff salary database.
- The [Accountability Report](#) is produced annually and is available online and in printed form.
- The Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness maintains publicly accessible, searchable and downloadable institutional reports including the [Fact Book](#), [IPEDS Data Feedback Reports](#), the [Common Data Set](#), Key Performance Indicators, degrees awarded, faculty credentials, and other ad hoc data research briefs.
- Accreditation standings with specialized agencies and the Higher Learning Commission are publicly disclosed on the [Accreditation website](#).

- CSU participates in the Voluntary System of Accountability [College Portrait](#) and [Student Achievement Measure](#) reporting; both projects provide greater accountability through accessible, transparent and comparable information on public institutions of higher education.
- CSU complies with the Colorado Open Records Act, making all public records open for inspection by any person at reasonable times, except as otherwise provided by law.
- Meetings of the [Board of Governors](#) are open to the public and each meeting includes an opportunity for public comment.
- The [General Catalog](#), the Graduate and Professional Bulletin, and nearly all other publications prepared for students and prospective students are updated annually and are readily available publicly online.
- All costs of attendance are clearly disclosed on the Financial Aid website, including the required [net price calculator](#).
- CSU fully complies with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' Principles of Excellence guidelines for educational institutions receiving federal funding.
- The institution is a member institution of the [National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements \(SARA\)](#). SARA membership provides state-level reciprocity to support the national efforts to increase educational attainment rates while making state authorization more efficient with regards to institutional practices that cross state boundaries.
- [Gainful Employment Disclosures](#) for post-bachelor certificate programs are accessible online as required.
- Program learning outcomes are available in the [General Catalog](#) for all degree programs and graduation outcomes including wage data are available online for public viewing.
- [Consumer disclosure information](#) is currently being added to the disclaimer web page linked at the bottom every CSU web page.

## Sources

---

- Accountability Report
- Accountability Website
- Accreditation Website
- BOG Bylaws Policies and Procedures
- Common Data Set
- Consumer Information, Disclosures and Disclaimer
- Fact Book
- Fiscal Transparency Report
- Gainful Employment Disclosures
- IPEDS Data Feedback Report
- Net Price Calculator
- SARA
- Student Achievement Measure
- VSA College Portrait

## 2.C - Core Component 2.C

---

The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.
4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

### Argument

---

The Board of Governors of the Colorado State University System has responsibility for three independent institutions: Colorado State University, Colorado State University-Pueblo and Colorado State University-Global. Each of these institutions is independently accredited by HLC. The [Board's Bylaws](#) are attached.

The Board has nine voting members, appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Colorado Senate, and six non-voting advisory members. The advisory members include one faculty member and one student from each of the three institutions who are selected by their constituents.

The Board functions with five standing committees: Executive, Evaluation, Academic and Student Affairs, Audit and Finance and Real Estate and Facilities. Advisory members serve on the latter three committees. Most matters that come before the Board have been previously received and reviewed by one of the standing committees. Standing committee meetings are scheduled so that all board members, not just committee members, have the option to attend.

#### **2.C.1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.**

Minutes of the Board's deliberations demonstrate that it engages in discussions of the priorities of the CSUS and each of its institutions (an [example](#) is attached for review). Discussions focus on, among other topics, governance issues, strategic planning, financial operations and legal commitments. Minutes show the Board and its discussions to be forward-looking and directed toward sustainability and continuous quality improvement on its campuses. While the Board may approve policies and programs brought forward through the campus committee processes, it does not set campus policy or mandate which programs of study should be delivered. The Board operates with a set of committees but specifically limits deliberations to governance issues. The [goals](#) of the Board are attached.



**2.C.2 The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.**

Board meetings are open to the public and each meeting has time devoted to public comment. The Board considers input from those external constituents as well as internal constituents in its decision-making. Actions of the Board that reflect such inputs have included formation of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee, which reviews new degree program proposals, faculty and student affairs issues, and other matters prior to consideration by the full Board. The degree program proposals include student, faculty, resource and state impact factors relevant to the Board's decision and recommendation to the Colorado Commission on Higher Education. Other actions include annual approval of a calendar of internal audits determined by criteria based on relevance, impact, and risk; proposals for facilities; and real estate actions that consider the campus community as well as alumni, organizations and communities that may be impacted in the short- and long-term by proposals and programs.

**2.C.3 The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests, or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.**

The [Board's Bylaws](#) include Article IX, [Conflict of Interest](#), which is more fully described in the Board of Governors' Policy Manual. Article IX expressly states that "although members of the board may have allegiances to and associations with a particular System Institution and/or community, as well as other outside interests, their paramount fiduciary obligation is to serve the best interest of the Board and the System."

**2.C.4 The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.**

The Board approves an annual schedule of reports and actions to receive. This schedule includes whether the item is to be accepted or approved, thus serving as a useful tool for identifying their role in oversight versus day-to-day management issues, which are delegated to the administration and/or recognized as consistent with shared governance. A partial list of campus actions that are reported to the Board and accepted include learning outcomes and grades; faculty retention, promotion and tenure, workloads and salaries; student admissions, financial aid, retention, diversity, and graduation; off-campus programming; athletics; program reviews and accreditation schedules; and budget and audit updates. Action items and decisions related to major gifts and honorary degrees are initiated on campus and then reported to the Board. Because the Board has authority for awarding all degrees, honorary degree awards must be approved by the Board. A recent Board action delegated approval authority to the President for sabbatical leaves and revisions, emeritus appointments and leave without pay requests, with annual reports to be received by the Board.

Prior to submission to the Board, academic matters are considered and acted upon by the Faculty Council in consultation with administration and legal counsel. These include, but are not limited to: curriculum (new programs and program name changes), tenure and promotion policies, faculty

status, teaching and learning policies, and the calendar. Items that involve changes to the Academic Faculty and Administrative Professional Manual or new programs go forward for action by the Board. Board action is also required to adopt changes to: the Student Conduct Code, student fee plans, tuition proposals, budget, bond plans, capital construction plans, the President's contract and evaluation and the University Strategic Plan.

## Sources

---

- Board Minutes
- BOG Bylaws Policies and Procedures
- Policy 101 CSUS BOG Goals Policy
- Policy 103 CSUS BOG Board and Committee Meeting Minutes and Materials Policy
- Policy 107 CSUS Board Code of Ethics Policy
- Policy 108 CSUS Board Conflict of Interest Policy

## 2.D - Core Component 2.D

---

The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

## Argument

---

As an academic community, Colorado State University embraces academic freedom. This freedom comes with responsibilities; faculty are expected to follow professional standards for discourse and publication, to indicate when speaking on matters of public interest that they are not speaking on behalf of the institution, and to conduct themselves in a civil and professional manner consistent with the normal functioning of the University.

CSU considers freedom of expression and inquiry essential to a student's educational development and complies fully with Colorado Senate Bill 17-062, which addresses student free speech on campus by prohibiting public institutions of higher education from limiting or restricting student expression in a student forum. Additionally, the University recognizes the right of all University members to engage in discussion; to exchange thought and opinion; and to speak, write, or print freely on any subject in accordance with the guarantees of the Federal and State constitutions. CSU is committed to valuing and respecting diversity including respect for diverse political, philosophical, and cultural viewpoints.

This commitment is explicitly disclosed and reaffirmed in several documents:

- [Freedom of Expression and Inquiry Policy](#)
- [Student Conduct Code](#)
- [Academic Faculty and Administrative Professional Manual](#)
- [General Catalog](#)



- [Free Speech and Peaceful Assembly Policy](#)

In 2018, a CSU [website](#) focused on the First Amendment and free speech in higher education was launched to offer resources and information for those navigating such issues. Also in 2018, a Free Speech Summit was held on campus. The University developed a First Amendment Conversation Series to educate faculty and staff on issues related to free speech and higher education. More than 400 people participated in that series. This program was also delivered as part of the President's Fall Leadership Forum, providing an opportunity for all academic department heads, deans, and key university leaders to ask questions and learn the basics for navigating First Amendment issues. A parallel program is under development for students, and it will launch in summer 2018 as part of new student orientation.

The Board of Governors also has a [policy](#) that addresses free speech.

## Sources

---

- Faculty and Administrative Professional Manual
- First Amendment Website
- Free Speech and Peaceful Assembly Policy
- Freedom of Expression and Inquiry Policy
- Policy 129 CSUS Board Freedom of Speech and Peaceful Assembly Policy
- President's Fall 2017 Fall Address
- Student Conduct Code

## 2.E - Core Component 2.E

---

The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, students and staff.

1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.
2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.
3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

## Argument

---

### **2.E.1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.**

CSU takes pride in the quality and quantity of research completed and underway. The [Research Integrity and Compliance Review Office](#) (RICRO) provides assistance to researchers, staff, and faculty oversight committees in the following ways:

- Protection of animal subjects - Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee.
- Protection of human participants - Institutional Review Board.
- Responsible use of biohazardous agents and rDNA - Institutional Biosafety Committee.
- Dual use research of concern oversight - Institutional Review Entity.
- Assistance for researchers in meeting quality system requirements required by regulatory standards - Quality Program.
- Promotion of ethical behavior in the conduct of science and scholarship - Responsible Conduct of Research.
- Oversight to ensure conflict of interests (COI) are managed so responsibilities can be performed without compromise to the independence essential to scholarly life.
- Enforcement of the CSU Misconduct in Research policy.

CSU is committed to upholding the highest standards of ethical conduct in research through oversight and adjudication of potential cases of misconduct and through extensive training programs on [Responsible Conduct in Research](#) (RCR). Students and postdoctoral fellows engaged in research funded by NIH, NSF, and USDA-NIFA are required to complete RCR training. The training focuses on nine core areas: 1) ethics and social responsibility in research 2) conflict of interest 3) the use of animal/human subjects and safe laboratory practices 4) mentor/mentee responsibilities 5) collaborative research 6) data acquisition, management, sharing and ownership 7) research misconduct 8) responsible authorship, publication and peer review and 9) financial management and responsibilities. Training content is designed to be appropriate for the educational and responsibility level of the trainee and the discipline.

CSU has a variety of mechanisms for providing RCR training. Formal courses such as GRAD 544 (Ethical Conduct of Research) and 19 other departmental/college courses are approved by the Provost to meet these requirements. Individualized mentoring from the trainee's faculty advisor or other designee of their department/program is a critical part of the RCR education. In addition, CSU has several undergraduate research program-specific RCR courses/workshops including the NSF Research Experiences for Undergraduates course and the Office of Undergraduate Research and Artistry RCR training.

CSU subscribes to iThenticate, the anti-plagiarism software that is currently used by NSF. This online tool available to CSU faculty, through the Libraries, to check proposals and manuscripts prior to submission as a means to guard themselves against potential future claims of plagiarism or self-plagiarism.

The CSU System Chancellor communicates institutional expectations related to compliance with federal and state laws and ethical standards of behavior. This [letter](#) is distributed to faculty, staff, and students on each CSU System campus.

## **2.E.2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.**

The Colorado Department of Higher Education [Guaranteed Transfer \(GT\) Pathways Curriculum Information Literacy](#) competency is addressed by courses within the History Department. Students gain knowledge about ethical selection and use of sources as well as appropriate citation methods.

### **2.E.3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.**

Student behavior is governed by a comprehensive [Student Conduct Code](#) that mandates students and student organizations maintain standards of personal integrity in harmony with the educational goals of the institution. By formulating this code of conduct, the University affirms student freedoms coupled with full responsibility as members of the academic community. Included within the code is the prohibition of academic misconduct including, but not limited to: cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized possession or disposition of academic materials, falsification or facilitation of acts of misconduct. Specific procedures for cases of academic misconduct are also described in the [Academic Integrity Policy](#), the [General Catalog](#), the Graduate Student Bulletin, the [Faculty Manual](#) and the [Honor Code of the Professional Veterinary School](#).

The CSU [Faculty and Administrative Professional Manual](#) guides all instructors to address academic integrity on every course syllabus. The Faculty Council incorporates the following standards for course syllabi in the Faculty Manual:

- Each course instructor shall state in his or her course syllabus that the course will adhere to the Academic Integrity Policy of the Colorado State University General Catalog and the Student Conduct Code.
- By the end of the second week of the course and/or in the course syllabus, the course instructor shall address academic integrity as it applies to his or her course components.

Since the last reaffirmation in 2014, the institution moved from the BlackBoard to Canvas as the enterprise learning management system. Through Canvas, VeriCite (a plagiarism detection application) has been made available to all instructors. It may be configured by instructors to provide students the ability to submit assignment drafts for review so that issues can be detected and corrected before the final submission. In this way, it contributes to student learning and the prevention of plagiarism. Instructors in some disciplines may regularly use software other than VeriCite to detect plagiarism, such as Computer Science's use of a Measure of Software Similarity, a free program developed at Stanford to detect plagiarism in computer code assignments.

Proctoring protocol for online and on-campus courses requires that students are monitored while sitting for an examination. The Curriculum Information Management System requires identification of proctoring protocols which vary by course section.

The Student Resolution Center encourages students to gain awareness, knowledge, skills, and opportunities as they navigate challenges and make informed decisions. The office does this through two processes:

- Conflict Resolution—voluntary, neutral, confidential process to assist students when conflicts, disputes, or issues arise.
- Student Conduct—one-on-one meetings to discuss alleged violations of the Student Conduct Code, hear student perspectives, explore personal responsibility, hold students accountable and provide educational and restorative outcomes when appropriate.

There were 304 adjudicated cases of academic misconduct in FY17. Center staff coached faculty on educational approaches, prevention strategies, and managing incidents of academic misconduct. During Academic Integrity Week, students learn about 1) how to avoid becoming an 'accidental plagiarist,' 2) tools and tips for formatting citations and 3) ethical considerations in writing manuscripts, the thesis or dissertation; and other issues surrounding academic honesty.

## Sources

---

- Academic Integrity Policy
- Chancellor Memo
- DVM Code of Honor
- Faculty and Administrative Professional Manual
- GT Pathways Information Literacy
- RCR Training
- RICRO
- Student Conduct Code

## 2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

---

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

### Summary

---

#### Assurance Evidence Summary

The evidence, both described and attached for review, affirms that CSU continues to meet the requirements of Criterion 2.

CSU is committed to conducting its affairs transparently, ethically and in compliance with all laws, regulations, and University policies. While CSU has an Office of Policy and Compliance, there are many additional offices and activities focused on integrity and ethics in all operations. The institution is accountable to its constituents for actions and provides information in an accessible way. CSU is committed to the free exchange of ideas, the principles of academic freedom and it upholds the highest standards of ethical conduct in research and academic integrity.

Updates since the last reaffirmation of accreditation include:

- The modification of the "Disclaimer" website to include "Consumer Information Disclosures".
- The implementation of VeriCite plagiarism tool within the new Canvas learning management system.
- Creation of an anonymous bias-reporting website.

- A Free Speech Summit, Free Speech Conversation Series for faculty and staff and the creation of a free speech website.

Ethical and responsible conduct are central to Goals 4, 8, and 9 of the University Strategic Plan.

## **3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support**

---

The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

### **3.A - Core Component 3.A**

---

The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

### **Argument**

---

#### **3.A.1 Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.**

See Criterion 1.A.2 for a description of how the currency of courses and programs is monitored.

The [Curricular Policies and Procedures Handbook](#) contains the processes for course and program approval or modification. Proposals include student learning outcomes to ensure an appropriate level of rigor, methods of assessment, instructional delivery, contact hours, and credit hours.

Most general education course learning outcomes are set in accordance with the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) Guaranteed Transfer (GT) Pathways Curriculum thereby ensuring appropriate rigor. In 2016, the CDHE embraced [SLOs and Content Competencies](#) from the LEAP agenda of the American Council of Colleges and Universities. These SLOs and competencies reflect national best practice and will be fully in place by fall 2020 for all courses that serve the GT Pathways agreement.

### **3.A.2 The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.**

CSU academic programs are distinctly differentiated by discipline (CIP code) and degree level as found in the [Official List of Colleges, Departments, Degrees, Majors and Minors](#). The Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) differ accordingly. This is initially monitored through the program approval process and is monitored thereafter through the program review process (see Criterion 4.A.1).

As noted in the [report](#) from the last comprehensive visit, the focus on PLOs in the program review process is relatively recent. It has highlighted significant variation across campus in the quality of PLOs and associated assessment plans. To increase the consistency, in FY17, The Institute for Learning and Teaching (TILT) partnered with the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness in the review process. TILT has worked with faculty to help them define PLOs that are specific, current and articulated in a way that differentiates degree level and discipline (an [example](#) is attached). Additionally, TILT helps faculty create sustainable assessment plans that yield actionable information about the strengths and challenges within a program of study. Increasing consistency in the quality of PLOs will continue to be a focus of the review process.

### **3.A.3 The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations.**

#### Consistency Across Delivery Modes

CSU instructional delivery definitions comply with federal standards and HLC definitions. Instructors are required to report the course section delivery mode at the end of each semester when submitting student grades. This allows the institution to capture what actually occurred instead of what was planned as changes do happen occasionally.

Consistency across delivery modes is required (and therefore monitored) because degrees/certificates are transcribed as a CSU credential without regard to how courses are delivered.

CSU delivers most courses on-campus face-to-face (FTF) with a much smaller portion delivered online and even fewer delivered by some other modality. Therefore, on-campus FTF instruction sets the standard for quality and learning goals. Consistency across all delivery modes is monitored in several ways:

- There are extensive approval processes in place through the departments and University Curriculum Committee (UCC) to ensure the initial quality of courses/programs regardless of delivery mode.
- The UCC retains review of all course/program modifications that do not maintain a 75% FTF standard to ensure that student-faculty interaction and learning outcomes are not modified from the original approval to an extent that program quality or rigor are compromised.

- Online courses incorporate [Quality Matters Standards](#) to ensure consistency with FTF content and outcomes. CSU Online is in the process of reviewing all courses against the standards, even those created before the standards were adopted at CSU.
- The program review process requires that equivalency across instructional delivery modes be demonstrated and that a plan be created if shortcomings are identified.
- The [student course survey](#) currently being designed includes questions regarding technology use and functionality in the course. The same survey will be provided at the end of each course regardless of the instructional delivery mode (FTF, hybrid, online, etc.).
- Many of the faculty who teach courses online also teach FTF on campus for the same department.

The quality of online education at CSU has earned national attention through [U.S. News](#)

- #23 in Best Online Bachelor's Programs
- #29 in Best Online Graduate Engineering Programs
- #31 in Best Online Graduate Computer Information Technology Programs
- #40 in Best Online Graduate Business Programs (excluding MBA)
- #42 in Best Online MBA Programs

Additionally, Financial Times ranked the online [MBA](#) 12th in the nation.

Syllabi from the following courses illustrate that student engagement is paramount in online courses ([LSPA 346](#), [HORT 100](#) and [CO301B](#)) just as it is FTF courses. Online courses may generate more than 1,200 postings by 20 students in threaded discussions within an eight-week term. The use of GTAs (or equivalent) to facilitate engagement by responding at least daily to students' questions is highly encouraged.

On the National Survey of Student Engagement, seniors in online programs report higher levels of academic challenge than their on-campus peers. They also report higher scores for effective teaching practices and experiences with faculty.

#### Consistency Across Locations

CSU delivers most courses through on-campus FTF or hybrid instruction with a much smaller portion delivered elsewhere. Therefore, on-campus FTF instruction sets the standard for SLOs when sections are taught at other locations. Course content, requirements, outcomes, assessments, and evaluations are the responsibility of the academic department. Once a course or program has been approved for resident FTF instruction, there is no further curricular review or internal approval required for the same FTF instruction at another location.

In 2016, CSU participated in an [HLC Multi-Location Visit](#). Locations at the University of Alaska (UAF) at Fairbanks and The Denver Center were viewed. The educational facilities were found to be adequate for the education provided and the faculty met or exceeded the HLC credentialing guidelines at both locations. The reviewer noted the UAF location (a 2+2 DVM program) was early in its operations but did have the same PLOs and course-level SLOs as the on-campus



program. At the Denver Center, faculty for the Ph.D. in Education and Human Resources program were unable to articulate PLOs. CSU Online faculty understood the reviewer's feedback to be serious and since that time have been working with TILT to formally articulate the PLOs (a [draft](#) is attached).

At present, CSU does not offer any special sections of concurrent enrollment courses on high school campuses. All courses currently approved for concurrent enrollment are courses regularly offered to CSU students and taught by CSU faculty on the CSU campus. Therefore, SLOs and levels of achievement expected from concurrent enrollment students are identical with those for undergraduates. This approach also ensures that the faculty qualifications meet HLC standards. In fall 2017, there were only 14 concurrently enrolled students.

[Education Abroad](#) offers unique opportunities to students who want to immerse themselves in a global learning environment. The quality of those [locations](#) and experiences (course classification, contact hours, transferability etc.) is monitored by the Office of International Programs, Office of the Registrar, and the individual academic departments. Site visits and student evaluations give regular and important feedback about the courses and overall experience abroad to inform best practices and provide quality assurance.

[Semester at Sea](#), sponsored by the Institute for Shipboard Education (ISE), offers an [unparalleled educational program](#) in partnership with CSU. For each semester voyage, the University appoints an Academic Dean from among CSU's most accomplished faculty. Additionally, a Senior Academic Officer, who holds a dual appointment with ISE and CSU, facilitates the partnership. This person works with CSU departments to secure faculty and course syllabi, and to oversee the academic merit of curricular offerings. The Senior Academic Officer works closely with the CSU Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs and the ISE Vice President for Academics at Semester at Sea. As with other locations, courses with corresponding on-campus sections have identical SLOs and are advanced through the standard workflow process of department, college, and UCC approval.

Consistency across locations is monitored and required because degrees/certificates are transcribed as a CSU credential without regard to where courses are delivered.

## Sources

---

- 1046 20131104 Continued Accreditation - Team Report
- 1046 20161101 Multi Location Visit - Reviewer Analysis
- CO301B Writing in the Sciences
- Course Survey Materials
- CSU Online MBA
- Curricular Policies & Procedures Handbook
- Education Abroad Handbook
- Exchange Partners
- GT Pathways SLOs
- HORT 100 Syllabus S18



- LSPA 346 OL Syllabus
- Official List of Colleges, Departments, Degrees, Majors and Minors
- OLPC Program Learning Outcomes
- QM Standards
- Semester at Sea
- Semester at Sea Affiliation Agreement
- UCC Responsibilities & Procedures

## 3.B - Core Component 3.B

---

The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.
4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.
5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

## Argument

---

### **3.B.1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.**

Currently, all undergraduate degree programs are composed of two integrated components; one reflecting disciplinary learning and one reflecting a general education through the completion of the All University Core Curriculum ([AUCC](#)). There are two issues with this approach. First, it disregards the important contributions to learning made outside of the classroom. Second, it lacks Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs). Because of these issues, a vibrant discussion has begun to create ILOs that would overarch disciplinary PLOs, general education PLOs and student affairs PLOs. These ILOs are intended to describe what it means to earn a CSU degree at any level (undergraduate or graduate). The [recommended ILOs](#) are as follows:

### Collaboration

The ability to focus discussions on ideas rather than on personalities, the skills to address issues respectfully in ways that acknowledge and integrate diverse perspectives and cultures and support cooperation and teamwork in pursuit of the common good, and the capacities to take initiative and to assume both supporting and leadership roles in ways that empower others and promote effective action.

### Communication

Written and oral communication for technical, professional, and public audiences, and the capacities to listen substantively and contribute effectively one-on-one, in small groups and in communities.

### Creativity

An appreciation for the arts and sciences in support of the expression and understanding of the human condition and human community, the cultivation and application of the imagination to inform new ways of understanding the world, and in seeking innovative solutions to local and global challenges.

### Reasoning

Analysis, synthesis, critical thinking, information literacy, problem identification and problem solving appropriate to the domain, as well as in interdisciplinary reasoning requiring application of general knowledge to develop multi-disciplinary solutions to key challenges at all levels of society.

### Stewardship

Developing an understanding of financial, environmental, civic/political and ethical sustainability and health literacies to responsibly engage in professional, family, community, and civic settings, and encouraging a commitment to service to meet local, professional, civic, and global challenges.

Once the ILOs are finalized, assessment plans will be created and implemented.

The general education program, the AUCC, was developed and refined by the faculty to be appropriate to the institutional mission while also complying with requirements from the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE). It is comprised of four elements: Basic Competencies; Advanced Writing; Foundations and Perspectives; Depth and Integration.

- Basic Competencies courses provide instruction in the skills essential to the ability to write clearly, speak effectively, understand and apply quantitative reasoning, make sense of abstract ideas, reason analytically, and read critically with comprehension.
- Advanced Writing courses enhance skills in written communication to extend rhetorical knowledge, experience in writing processes, mastery of writing convention, and to demonstrate comprehension of content knowledge at the advanced level through effective communication strategies.
- Foundations and Perspectives courses bring basic skills to life and give them direction and purpose. Elements of foundation offer exemplary introductions to fields and areas of study that explore their distinctive characteristics as well as critical links within and among them.

Elements of perspective promote coherence and integration of knowledge within and among fields and areas of study, often through the exploration of significant thematic issues. Foundation elements frequently will be introduced in disciplinary contexts. Perspective elements typically will be structured comparatively and enlivened through interdisciplinary contexts.

- Depth and Integration courses are designated courses within each major that build upon the rest of the AUCC. Every major requires a capstone experience at the senior level that consists of a designated course or sequence of courses that offer the opportunity for integration and reflection on students' nearly completed baccalaureate education.

It was [noted](#) during the last reaffirmation visit that the culture of general education assessment was not as robust as that within the disciplines. This culture and the underlying causes are currently under discussion. Improvements are expected in the next year that will reshape the general education distribution of credits into a more cohesive general education program that supports a more meaningful assessment process. See Criterion 4.B.2 for assessment outcomes.

**3.B.2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.**

The general education curriculum is articulated in the [AUCC](#). It was implemented in 2000 with SLOs stated for each of the four elements previously described. Subsequently, pursuant to Colorado Revised Statute Section 23-1-108.5, the CDHE convened the General Education Council to recommend statewide articulation agreements to standardize general education across Colorado public institutions of higher education resulting in guaranteed transfer (GT Pathways) courses. That standardization was updated in 2017 and is represented in the current AUCC courses that serve the GT Pathways initiative.

Each baccalaureate program of study incorporates the AUCC as described in detail in the [General Catalog](#). The faculty established two policies to emphasize the overall importance of the AUCC as an integrated component of student learning.

- An overall GPA requirement of a 2.0 or greater for all courses taken to complete the AUCC requirements is intended to encourage students to think of the AUCC as an important part of the undergraduate experience integral to being a successful student.
- A 60-credit ceiling was also established, requiring undergraduate students to complete foundational course work in composition and mathematics before proceeding further with advanced coursework. This ceiling demonstrates the faculty's commitment, whereby students are expected to develop core competencies and skills before enrolling in courses that assume command and integration of these skills.

Element 4 of the [AUCC](#), Depth and Integration, further emphasizes the importance of integrating general education into the major as previously described.

**3.B.3 Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.**

Every degree program requires completion of basic and advanced writing courses as required by the AUCC. Students can, alternatively but also through the AUCC, focus on writing arguments, and writing in digital environments, technical writing, or business writing. In 2017, CSU was acknowledged by [U.S. News and World Report](#) annual ranking of America's top universities for its focus on writing in the disciplines.

Modes of inquiry and creativity are addressed throughout Category 3 of the [AUCC](#) as well as in many disciplinary upper division courses.

As previously described, each major must designate courses that build upon the [AUCC](#) competencies of writing, speaking, and problem solving in an integrative and complementary way. Further, every major requires a capstone experience at the senior level that consists of a designated course or sequence of courses that offer the opportunity for integration and reflection on students' nearly completed baccalaureate education.

**3.B.4 The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.**

A CSU education recognizes the importance of diversity in both curricular and co-curricular spaces as initially described in Criterion 1.C.1. Additional evidence, specific to the classroom, follows.

The objective of the Social and Behavioral Sciences requirement of the [AUCC](#) is to explore the forms and implications of individual and collective behaviors, their ties to formal institutions and their study methods. The Global and Cultural Awareness courses engage students in the study of particular cultural identities, explore the interactions among these cultural identities, and consider the ways in which these patterns of interaction are related to the larger global context. The Arts and Humanities requirement investigates the cultural character and literatures of human experiences, fundamental questions of value and meaning, and, both in word and beyond words, the symbols and creative expressions of human life.

Discussions are underway to create a more cohesive general education program from the current AUCC distribution of credits. There are two suggestions under consideration specific to recognizing diversity. The first is to require diversity learning outcomes for each of the courses in the Social and Behavioral courses in the AUCC. The second is to move the Global and Cultural Awareness category to a Basic Competency element as the SLOs of that requirement are foundational to success in all areas of the curricula.

There has been significant outreach to academic units, and will continue to be in [SSI-2](#), to further develop multicultural competencies (outside of the AUCC), strategies to promote inclusive and responsive classroom environments and strategies to support identity development in the major. Examples include highlighting disciplinary advances made by diverse individuals,

employing learning assistants from diverse backgrounds, incorporating multicultural perspectives and creating a supportive environment in the classroom that encourages dialogue across difference. Additionally, some departments are working to better communicate the diversity within their already existing curriculum. For example, one of the program review insights for the Department of History is the need to better communicate the diversity present already in the current American History survey courses.

### **3.B.5 The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.**

Colorado State University is recognized as a premier research institution and routinely ranks in the top of all American Universities in research expenditures. The Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) has overall responsibility for facilitating the research enterprise at Colorado State University. OVPR works to encourage and support the development, marketing and application of CSU's intellectual property and world-renowned researchers, students and facilities. There are three standing committees to facilitate the institution's research efforts:

- HARP: Stimulating new diverse funding opportunities based on multidisciplinary high impact ideas.
- INSTAR: An ethos of agility and innovative infrastructural support of sponsored activity, support of large complex proposals, animal use, and core facilities.
- PROPEL: Optimizing performance and excellence in research personnel, acknowledging achievements, sustainable program for the recruitment/retention of faculty alignment with HARP research initiatives, graduate/undergraduate research, and increased inclusion of multicultural elements including diverse workforce and ideas.

In FY17, CSU had \$338M in research expenditures by increasing both federal and nonfederal award dollars. Research and scholarly products in the same year included 44 license agreements, 203 active patents and applications, 101 inventions filed and 66 patents issued. Additionally, multiple faculty were internationally recognized for their achievements. Research facility investments were many including the Functional Foods for Health Clinical Research Facility and the Central Instrument Facility Laboratory. Strategic programs included the Catalyst for Innovative Partnerships Program, the School of Global Environmental Sustainability and cluster faculty hires in microbiome, aging, air quality and health (Office of the Vice President for Research [annual report](#) is attached)

A recent, third party, [economic and fiscal impact study](#) found that CSU is one of Colorado's leading sources of innovation in a broad range of industry sectors, including agriculture, engineering, biophysics, veterinary medicine, chemistry, atmospheric sciences and business. The study reported that CSU generates – along with startup businesses and licensing agreements – \$34 million in additional state tax revenue from innovation, research and development activities.

The Office of Undergraduate Research and Artistry (OURA) is committed to working with faculty to provide opportunities for undergraduates across all disciplines at Colorado State University. OURA is housed in The Institute for Learning and Teaching and operates multiple successful programs.

- JUR Press is a publishing entity headquartered at Colorado State University whose flagship publication is the Journal of Undergraduate Research and Scholarly Excellence. The Journal is recognized by the Library of Congress, serves an international audience, and accepts work from undergraduates in any discipline from any accredited postsecondary institution. It is entirely run by undergraduate students and support a staff of about 30 international editors.
- The Honors Undergraduate Research Scholars (HURS) Program fosters and supports high-performing undergraduate students involved in independent research. Entrance into the program is by invitation only. Incoming first-year students receive application information in the mail upon acceptance into CSU. Current CSU students must meet with the program coordinator in order to apply for the program.
- The Mentored Research and Artistry Program is designed to enhance and recognize the learning experiences of undergraduates who are engaged in research, artistry, or other forms of creative work. The experience allows students to distinguish themselves as undergraduate scholars in their disciplines. This opportunity is open to all undergraduate students in good academic standing who have at least two full semesters remaining before graduation.
- The Rocky Mountain Scholars Program, funded by the National Science Foundation, provides funding and enrichment opportunities for both undergraduates and graduate students studying in Science, Technology, Engineering, and/or Mathematics disciplines.
- The Multicultural Undergraduate Research Art and Leadership Symposium intentionally reaches out to students of color in various disciplines and exposes them to a variety of undergraduate research opportunities. Mentoring, presenting scholarly work, networking and learning about multicultural leadership are four main aspects of the program. In the past for years participation has gone from 18 to over 100 students.

## Sources

---

- 1046 20131104 Continued Accreditation - Team Report
- AUCC Curriculum
- Economic Impact Full Report
- Economic Impact Report Executive Summary
- ILO Recommendations
- Office of the VP Research
- SSI-2 Plan
- U.S. News Rankings

## 3.C - Core Component 3.C

---

The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the

curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.

2. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.
3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

## Argument

---

### **3.C.1 The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.**

Faculty Council, 2018, adopted six basic [faculty appointment types](#): tenured, tenure-track, contract, continuing, adjunct and transitional. There are multiple other, more complex, appointments also defined in the manual (affiliate, joint, etc.). This update since the last comprehensive visit eliminates the Senior Teaching Appointment which had been used inconsistently across colleges and provides a promotional pathway for non-tenure track faculty.

[Faculty counts have increased by 6%](#) since the last comprehensive HLC visit, keeping undergraduate lecture courses at an 18:1 ratio. This ratio is consistent with peer institutions. As reported in the [Common Data Set](#), one in four undergraduate lecture course sections has less than 20 students enrolled and 75% of the sections have fewer than 50 students enrolled. Lab/recitation courses average about 20 students. These ratios are provided as evidence that the number of faculty is appropriate for the size of the institution. The last comprehensive review noted a slight decrease in the percentage of student credit hours (SCH) taught by tenured and tenure-track faculty (TTF). [Currently, 35% of undergraduate and 75% of graduate SCH are taught by TTF.](#)

[Faculty hires, promotion and retention](#) are analyzed annually to ensure continuity. Each year about 50 faculty leave the institution. When a faculty member leaves, an [exit interview](#) is generally conducted. The primary reasons given for leaving are retirement and professional opportunities at other institutions that are not available at CSU. These often fall into unique leadership opportunities such as leading a large research endeavor or to become a department Chair.

The faculty create and periodically update both disciplinary and AUCC curricula including learning outcomes as described in Criterion 3.B. Faculty continuity is therefore important in the stability of the curriculum and the assessment of student learning.



### **3.C.2 All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.**

One of the major components used initially in determining the qualifications of candidates for appointment as faculty members is a review of formal educational credentials. Policy for the selection of faculty members is detailed in the [Academic Faculty and Administrative Professional Manual](#). This process usually begins with development of a position description that includes minimum qualifications i.e., a degree that is more advanced than the program unless it is a terminal or professional degree. In addition, faculty members are expected to know how to teach, conduct research, and produce scholarly and creative works appropriate to the discipline. The review of credentials and selection of faculty members are the responsibilities of individual departments (peer evaluation within the discipline). Credential review for adjunct and non-employee instructor appointments, including affiliate faculty for teaching dual-credit, contractual, and consortial teaching, is likewise, the responsibility of the respective academic department. Ninety-nine percent of tenured and tenure-track faculty hold a terminal degree in their discipline. While that percentage is less for non-tenure-track faculty, all meet the minimum standard of 18 graduate credit hours (or equivalent experience) in their discipline. [Faculty credentials](#) are available for public review online and faculty are encouraged to review their own data for accuracy.

Concurrent enrollment is addressed in Criterion 3.A.3.

The faculty quality at other locations or in consortial programs are reviewed in the same manner as CSU on-campus faculty.

### **3.C.3 Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.**

The [Academic Faculty and Administrative Professional Manual](#) articulates the criteria for faculty performance reviews. All faculty provide evidence of teaching and advising competence, sustained research and other creative activity, and service consistent with their stated effort distribution for annual and periodic comprehensive reviews, as well as for tenure and promotion. Individual department codes clearly articulate criteria and standards for evaluation.

In 2017, the institution implemented the [Digital Measures](#) faculty activity reporting system to assist faculty in their preparation for annual performance reviews. The system is expected to be extended to the tenure and promotion process.

### **3.C.4 The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.**

The primary means used by the institution to assess and assure that instructors are current in their discipline is through periodic evaluations as described above. Additionally, in the program review process departments are required to develop or update their faculty hiring plans and describe their methods for mentoring junior faculty (see Criterion 2).



[Professional development programs](#) related to teaching and learning are developed and delivered through departments, colleges, the Libraries and The Institute for Learning and Teaching (TILT).

- The Master Teacher Initiative (MTI): TILT supports the MTI in each of the colleges, the Libraries, and Student Affairs. MTI coordinators distribute teaching tips on a weekly basis and plan luncheons each semester for their colleagues, allowing each MTI to respond to the needs and interests of faculty in specific disciplines. As of AY17, attendance at MTI sessions increased to 330 members. The objectives are to underscore the importance of quality teaching within the context of the University's overall mission, provide opportunities for faculty to address common teaching interests/concerns and contribute to the creation of a culture where the scholarship of teaching is valued and appreciated.
- Seminars, workshops, and colloquia: These events engage participants in both didactic and active learning about a wide range of topics related to learning and teaching, e.g., integrating the use of high-impact educational practices; aligning course content, class plans, and class meeting objectives with course learning outcomes; and integrating educational technologies in ways that support three key types of learning: robust (basic content and skills mastery), integrative (making connections across topics, courses, and contexts); and self-regulated (using study approaches and time management strategies that support learning). Participation in these events increased to 1,100 faculty members in AY17.
- The annual TILT Summer Conference: This event offers in-depth work with a focused set of topics, for example, using online adaptive learning platforms outside class time to support the use of engaged learning approaches during class time. The Conference typically includes one or more keynotes by a nationally noted speaker as well as many sessions offered by CSU colleagues. The 2017 conference attracted around 150 faculty participants with some graduate students and staff members attending as well.
- Short Courses for Instructors: These short courses are designed to provide the time to explore learning and teaching issues in detail, typically through a series of three or four sessions scheduled across a semester among small groups so that discussions can be tailored to the needs and interests of the participants. In FY17, 330 instructors took part in 18 short courses.
- Mid-Semester Feedback Program: Instructors requesting a classroom visit by an experienced observer and are offered suggestions based on the observer's systematic records, as well as anonymous feedback from students. Approximately 10 instructors participate per year.
- The Professional Development Institute (PDI): Now in its 34th year, the PDI offers short sessions on a wide range of topics designed to enhance faculty, staff, and graduate student professional growth and personal enrichment over a three-day period each January. In 2017, more than 3,652 members of the University community attended 115 PDI sessions.
- ACUE's Course in Effective Teaching: For the last two years, CSU has had two cohorts of 25 faculty participate in the course to demonstrate research-driven, best teaching practices that have been shown to improve student learning outcomes. The Course includes 25 one-hour online modules across five comprehensive units of study. Consisting of more than 180 instructional videos, the Course showcases exemplary teaching on campuses nationwide and features interviews with leading experts in college instruction.

- Graduate Teaching Certificate Program: The Graduate Teaching Certificate program offers graduate students an opportunity to learn about, reflect on, and practice teaching at the post-secondary level. The program is flexible, allowing graduate students to focus on areas of teaching that most interest them and best meet their professional needs. It emphasizes fundamental aspects of teaching, from syllabus development and classroom management to putting theoretical approaches into practice and using inclusive instructional strategies. The certificate program provides peer-to-peer workshops (five offered in AY17, with 85 attendees); opportunities to learn by observing more experienced instructors; and support to develop a teaching portfolio. Since it was founded in 2007, the program has attracted more than 450 participants and generated 134 approved teaching portfolios, with increasing completion rates.
- Orientation for New Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs): Each fall, TILT and the Graduate School offer a one-day orientation, with online components, which is required for new GTAs. During the orientation, experienced teaching assistants, faculty and staff address key issues related to teaching in lecture, discussion and laboratory settings. Key topics include strategies for enhancing teaching, learning, and academic integrity, assessment of student performance and a review of GTA responsibilities and expectations. In addition, incoming GTAs are introduced to many of the campus resources that support effective teaching and learning. Attendance is typically about 375 GTAs. A facilitated online orientation is provided for those GTAs (about 25) who begin teaching in the spring semester. This has been expanded since the last comprehensive visit.

### **3.C.5 Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.**

Per the [Academic Faculty and Administrative Professional Manual](#), faculty members are required to make time available for student conferences and advising. Office hours should be convenient to both students and instructor with opportunity provided for pre-arranged appointments. Available conference times should be communicated to students. In the [2016 NSSE](#), first-year student-faculty interactions were rated significantly higher than at other large land grant institutions and the experience of seniors was statistically similar to their peers. Additional evidence of access to instructors is provided in Criterion 3.D.2 and 3.D.3.

### **3.C.6 Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.**

All staff positions are defined through position descriptions that include minimum qualifications for the fulfillment of the position responsibilities. Most positions are filled through search committee reviews of applicants to ensure that candidates are qualified. The Office of Equal Opportunity also has established processes to ensure that all candidates who proceed to interviews meet the minimum criteria of the job description. Each unit has primary responsibility for mentoring, professional development, and periodic evaluation (expected to be annual or more frequent) of its employees. In addition, staff members in leadership positions often participate (with unit support) in regional and national professional organizations to stay current on best practices. Institutional training and professional development efforts are supported by multiple areas: The Institute for Teaching and Learning, the Office of Training and Organizational

Development and the Office of the Vice President for Diversity. Additional training and professional development activities for staff are reviewed in Component 5.A.4.

## Sources

---

- Common Data Set
- Digital Measures Activity System
- Exit Interviews
- Fact Book
- Faculty and Administrative Professional Manual
- Faculty Appointments
- Faculty Credentials
- Faculty Hires Promotion and Retention
- National Survey of Student Engagement Results
- SCH by Faculty Type
- TILT Professional Development Opportunities

## 3.D - Core Component 3.D

---

The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).
5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

## Argument

---

### 3.D.1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.

Student support services are as varied at CSU as are the students that attend. The institution participates in the [CIRP Freshmen Survey](#) to better understand the incoming students' background characteristics, high school experiences, attitudes, behaviors, and expectations for college.

Most, but not all, student support services are organized in the Division of Student Affairs which is dedicated to supporting students in the development of their unique potential, inspiring them to be active learners, successful graduates, and engaged global citizens. The Division coordinates closely with other areas including Academic Affairs, Athletics, and International Affairs to support students. The University's strategic and comprehensive array of support services continuously evolves to address student needs and includes the following examples:

- Rams Against Hunger provides food to students with food insecurity issues. A total of 172 students were provided meals last year.
- Conference & Event Services partners with the Access Center to provide support for several summer programs including Upward Bound (60 participants), Bridge Scholars (30 participants), National Hispanic Institute (155 participants), Talent Search (40 participants) and INSPIRE (150 participants).
- The CSU Bookstore piloted digital texts with several classes that were either delivered directly to students or through CSU's Learning Management System at a cost below traditional print media costs. Texts were also available at the beginning of class ensuring that all students had immediate access to course materials without waiting for financial aid. This program is currently being expanded.
- CSU was the first institution in the country to offer a First Generation financial aid award. In fall 2017, 218 pioneering students received an average of \$2,064 to assist in financing their education.
- The Institute for Learning and Teaching provides tutoring services for the general population students while Student-Athlete Support Services (SASS) focuses its efforts on student-athletes. SASS also supported student-athletes with individualized advising, supervised structured study, early registration, and performance monitoring.
- Parent and Family Programs supports several campus departments by providing Spanish translation of programming/materials for families where Spanish is the primary language.
- The Fostering Success Program (FSP) was awarded multiple grants from the AJL Charitable Foundation to support students who have aged out of the foster care system in career exploration/development and mentoring. In June 2016, the Galena Foundation made a \$1M donation to the FSP Leadership fund to endow the salary for a position with the program.
- Case Management, served 2,430 individual and unique students with mental health, medical, alcohol and/or drug, legal, or personal crises (up 22% from last year).
- The Student Diversity Programs and Services composed of the Asian/Pacific American Cultural Center, Black/African American Cultural Center, El Centro, Native American Cultural Center, Resources for Disabled Students, Women and Gender Advocacy Center, and Pride Resource Center, help create a sense of shared community, provided cultural education and leadership opportunities, and foster efforts to promote social justice.
- CSU was ranked 13th nationally among four-year universities by [Military Times](#) for its service to veterans and active military. CSU partners with the Veterans Administration to provide VA Yellow Ribbon benefits to qualified students.
- The Key Learning Communities provide diverse students with a structured first-year experience. Students apply to the Communities and are selected based on a holistic review of experience and potential. Most often, participating students are minoritized and/or first-generation and/or Pell Grant recipient. The Communities routinely demonstrate [higher](#)

[retention](#) and graduation rates than are observed for similar students outside of the Communities. This is especially true when participation is paired with financial aid through the Community for Excellence.

- The [Colorado State University's Tuition Assistance Grant](#) is a means for undergraduate Colorado residents to access and achieve their postsecondary educational goals. The grant utilizes federal, state, and institutional funds to cover at least one-half of the student's share of base tuition for students who have a family adjusted gross income of \$57,000 or less and a qualified expected family contribution. Students who are Pell Grant eligible may be eligible to receive funds to cover 100% of the student's share of base tuition and standard fees. Implementation of an institutional aid application that includes information about non-custodial parent income has allowed for more strategic disbursement of financial aid to neediest students.
- For academically talented and motivated students, CSU offers the [Honors Program](#) to provide an enriched educational program of study. The Honors program is open to students in all majors and offers a flexible curriculum and a faculty-mentored senior-year activity. Many Honors students choose to live in a residential learning community with their peers.
- [Undocumented students](#) have been assigned a personal scholar contact who communicates with them and tracks their progress. Dream Zone training on how to work with and support undocumented and immigrant students is provided for faculty and academic advisors. Student Legal Services arranged for lawyers who specialize in immigration law to meet with impacted students once a month. The University has been in regular communication with the Colorado congressional delegation on issues related to DACA and individual students. CSU has also signed on to additional lobbying efforts coordinated by the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities and the American Council on Education.
- CSU Online students also have support services tailored to their needs. CSU Online provides students with website links and a toll-free phone number to reach the appropriate unit on-campus to meet their needs. Students also have access to success coaches who work to ensure students receive individualized support. Success coaches work with on-campus units to assist students in completing applications for graduate school, securing financial aid, accessing library services etc. Further, if CSU Online students desire, they may pay additional student fees to have access to on-campus amenities such as the recreation center, student transportation passes and arts performances.

**3.D.2 The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.**

Orientation and Transition Programs assists first-year, second-year, and transfer students in making a successful transition to CSU including selecting courses appropriate to their academic preparation. This includes Ram Orientation, Ram Connect Extended Orientation, Ram Welcome, Transfer Programs and Year 2 at CSU. The process through which students develop expectations, knowledge, and connections are seen as critical to student persistence and success.

CSU has implemented a [website](#) that maps Advanced Placement, Concurrent Enrollment, and other college courses to specific majors. This new tool helps students avoid the situation of



“wasted credits” wherein a course may have mapped to one accepted at CSU, but not to one which would transfer into a specific major. Data indicates tens of thousands of uses of this web site in 2017.

About 9% of any incoming fall class is, by state criteria, identified through ACT/SAT scores as in need of remediation in math and/or reading and/or writing. CSU further assesses student readiness with placement examinations in math, chemistry and composition. These policies and procedures are disclosed in detail to prospective students in the [General Catalog](#) and [specialized publications](#). A Foreign Language Placement Examination is also provided for students who took language courses in high school and intend to continue studying the same language at CSU.

By Colorado Department of Higher Education policy, CSU is prohibited from offering remedial courses but is allowed to offer Supplemental Academic Instruction (SAI); co-requisite instruction paired with a college-level course. While SAI is under consideration on campus, it has not yet been adopted. The institution is also allowed to offer alternatives to remedial education such as bridge programs and refresher courses. This is a strategy used as necessary to ensure students are prepared academically to succeed.

About 80% of first year course sections participate in the Early Performance Feedback initiative in which faculty provide an indication of student performance within the first four weeks of class. Residence Life and the Collaborative for Student Achievement provide outreach to students not yet meeting faculty expectations. Outreach includes inviting these students to participate in the U-turn event to identify potential barriers to success and identifying resources to mitigate them.

### **3.D.3 The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.**

A cornerstone of CSU's initial [Student Success Initiative](#) (SSI) was to create an advising system that would play a significant educational role. The system, was discussed in the last comprehensive assurance argument and was fully implemented in 2016. It included the following elements:

- Broad academic guidance focused on learning and the academic process.
- Development of students as self-regulated learners and effective decision-makers.
- Continuous and substantive relationship between students and advisors.
- Holistic approach.
- Linking students' curricular and co-curricular learning.
- Emphasis on proactive outreach and strategic intervention.
- Reliance on data.
- Requiring expertise in student development, transition, diversity and cultural difference.

Two decisions proved crucial in the successful implementation and adoption of the new academic guidance system. The first, was to create the Academic Success Coordinator (ASC) role with a position description reflecting the aforementioned elements. The second, was to embed the ASC positions in academic departments. There was risk in doing so, since decentralizing in the

departments came with the potential loss of control, coordination, and even the integrity of the new role. The institution determined to accept such potential risks because of the potential for greater gain: the possibility of department ownership of the function, integration of ASCs in department culture, incorporation of ASC's in the academic department's processes, and influence of ASC perspectives in department awareness and decision-making.

Several steps were necessary to guarantee the integrity of the ASC role:

- **Memoranda of Agreement (MOA):** The MOA between central administration and each academic unit was created to specify the purposes, responsibilities, resources and ASC position description.
- **Resources:** In most cases, the university provided central funds to support the new positions. It was important that the funds were placed in a dedicated department account, viewable by the Provost Office, and contingent upon faithful implementation of the MOA terms.
- **Leveraging Change to Department Advising Systems:** As part of the agreement to install ASCs, departments agreed to transform their entire advising to be system consistent with the new paradigm.

Additionally, new procedures were implemented to reinforce cross-campus coordination and perspective:

- **On-Boarding and Training:** New ASCs participated in on-boarding and training specific to the distinctive characteristics, duties, and relationships of the ASC role.
- **ASC Network:** As required in each position description, all ASCs participate in monthly meetings of the Network. The meetings are constructed to reinforce the ASC role, create connections across departments, share data that illuminate opportunities for outreach and intervention, and share effective practices.
- **Annual Report:** An annual report is required of each department. The annual report is constructed to cause departments to reflect on the ASC role and function, analyze data that describe the composition of students in the major and students' progress through the major path and identify goals for the coming year. The department head signs off on the report and they are submitted to the Associate Vice President for Student Success.

In total, 38 departments now operate with the ASC model and more than 70 ASCs are in place. Not only has advising capacity increased through the new positions, academic guidance has been elevated to a strategic instrument of student success and a critical educational function. Undeclared student advising is still central to the work of the Collaborative for Student Success and is staffed by professional advisors.

Information is vital to the new conception of academic guidance and strategic action. The increased human capacity generated demand for better, deeper and timelier data to inform advisor and ASC interactions with individual students and intervention strategies with groups of students. CSU sought and received grants from the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#) and from [EDUCAUSE](#) wherein multiple technological tools were deployed in support of the new environment for academic guidance:



- Information Aimed at Strategic Intervention (EAB Student Success Collaborative – Campus)
- Degree Audit (u.achieve by College Source)
- Text Alerts (Ellucian Mobile, and later Campus M)
- Early Warning and Adjustment Assessment (Beacon, and later Qualtrics)
- Improved Student Landing Page (Revisions to RamWeb)
- In-Class Progress and Predictive Analytics (LoudCloud/LoudSight)

Two characteristics distinguished the approach to technological innovations to support advising:

- The focus was squarely on student success through academic guidance, not on the technology.
- The guiding leadership was composed of an active cross-campus collaboration among the Vice President for Information Technology, Associate Vice President for Student Success, Vice Provost for Institutional Research Planning and Effectiveness, Registrar, the Collaborative for Student Achievement, Information Systems, Academic Computing and Networking Services, and CSU Online. It is notable that the technology interests were working alongside, and not independent of, other critical functions and users.

Data from the [NSSE 2016 Survey](#) and its Advising Module provide support for improvements in advising since the implementation of the ASC Initiative:

- CSU first-year students rate the quality of their interactions with academic advisors at a level that is higher (a statistically significant difference) than first-year students at other institutions of higher education.
- CSU first-year students have statistically higher mean responses to all but one of the questions (statistically the same on this question) compared to first-year students at other institutions.
- About 49% of first-year students at CSU report getting the majority of their academic advice from advisors assigned to them compared to only 35% of first-year students at other institutions.

Most importantly, while implementing the ASC Initiative, the [freshman retention](#) rate increased 7.2 points and the six-year graduation rate increased 4.2 points.

Advising for CSU Online students may occur in the department but may also occur through the CSU Online advising team. The CSU Online advising team includes multiple student success coaches, a pre-admissions advisor, academic advisors, an administrator of appeals, events and special projects, an enrollment services representative and a manager of recruitment and enrollment to assist students within the context of online education.

### **3.D.4 The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning.**

#### Infrastructure

Since the last HLC reaffirmation, CSU transitioned from BlackBoard to the [Canvas Learning Management System](#) as part of its Unizin membership; the institution was one of the founding members. Canvas is more open and more easily allows for the integration of learning objects via Learning Technology Interoperability standards. The faculty have found Canvas to be a far superior learning infrastructure than either BlackBoard or WebCT.

As a [Unizin](#) member, the institution is in its second, expanded pilot of LoudSight's LoudCloud learning analytics dashboard that integrates with Canvas to deploy automated alerts to students. For example, if a student is late with a homework assignment, an alert is sent. Pilot results indicate an increased rate of on-time homework submissions. Additionally, the system has proven valuable for partitioning risk for students, allowing instructors and advisors to focus their limited time on students and activities where it will do the most good.

CSU Online has staff dedicated to acquisition and support of the technology that supports distance-delivered content. The learning technologies team includes three media specialists who support Canvas for distance instructors and students. CSU Online relies on the same campus technology assistance for distance students as the University uses for on-campus students. There are tutorials within the CSU Canvas portal for student questions.

The technical capacities and capabilities of the University are monitored by Academic Computing Networking Services (ACNS). ACNS works seamlessly with all campus entities to ensure technology is not compromised. All technology maintenance, upgrades, backup, remote services, and software, hardware or technical systems for communicating with students and instructors are handled by ACNS. The classroom Support Services unit of ACNS works cooperatively with the CSU Online media specialists to provide timely and comprehensive technology support to instructors and students. ACNS maintains use and standards policies for the on-campus and distance students.

CSU Online supports the implementations of digital technology tools by paying license fees, supporting software implementations, providing technical support, and by assessing those implementations. Staff are responsible for guiding implementations, supporting faculty, staff and students through those implementations, and assessing the pedagogical effectiveness of tools. To date, CSU Online has supported digital tools, including Learning Technology Interoperability tools, such as electronic readers, student risk analytics dashboards, survey tools, data visualization tools, adaptive learning platforms, video and video-engagement tools (e.g., PlayPosit) and virtual reality applications that are used in both CSU Online and on-campus courses.

Additional infrastructure and resources are discussed earlier and in Criterion 5.C.2.

### **3.D.5 The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.**

[Information literacy](#), as defined in the AUCC GT Pathways courses, is the set of skills needed to find, retrieve, analyze, and use information. Competency in information literacy represents a student's ability to know when there is a need for information. This learning outcome is required of GT Pathways history courses. See Criterion 3.B for a discussion of the GT Pathways and the AUCC.

The Libraries provide critical support to students and instructors. CSU Libraries were refurbished several years ago, at a cost of \$16.8 million, to add a 24-hour study space, and to support learning more directly as an information commons for students, with more than 40 student study rooms (all with computer display technology) able to be reserved in advance online. Morgan Library is open approximately 130 hours per week, and is staffed for reference help, IT support, and course reserves. Morgan Library records in excess of 1.6 million visits per year, and is a very active and engaged space. Students and instructors may use any of more than 300 desktop computers in Morgan Library, and may check out Windows and Mac laptops, Chromebooks, use a 3D printer, attend 3D printing classes and reserve a Virtual Reality room. A variety of ancillary technology, including iPads, may also be checked out from Morgan Library.

Students registered for credit courses offered through CSU Online also have full access to library databases, electronic journals and services. Librarians are available to provide library instruction and personalized reference services to help students navigate the library and information landscape. Online interactive library tutorials for learning to do library research are also available. The Technology Training Center (TTC) is located in Morgan Library and is designed to assist CSU faculty, staff, and students with training, support, and one-on-one appointments. The TTC provides training on Office 365, Office 2016, Adobe Creative Cloud, and other applications. TTC also offers assistance with Canvas, Echo 360, You SeeU, i-Clickers and general Classroom Technology.

The CSU Library document delivery services include:

- Full text databases of current news, business, and scholarly articles.
- Full text electronic journals available anytime via Sage, the library catalog system.
- Online databases for journals in all academic disciplines.
- Rapid web-based delivery of any journal, article, or book chapter through the Zap system. 90% of all online requests for materials from CSU or other libraries are delivered within 24 hours in PDF scanned format.
- A Distance Learning Library Team that is available to answer questions and assist with research.

## Sources

---

- AP and IB Credit
- Canvas Contract
- CIRP Results
- CSU Tuition Assistance Grant
- EDUCAUSE iPASS Grant
- GT Pathways Information Literacy
- IPASS Grant Agreement
- Key and C4E Impact
- NSSE Advising Module Report
- Retention Study
- SSI Final Report
- Undocumented at CSU
- University Honors Program
- Unizin Agreement
- Veteran Services Ranking

## 3.E - Core Component 3.E

---

The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.
2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

## Argument

---

### 3.E.1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.

The co-curricular programs at CSU are appropriate for a large residential research institution and foster student development while contributing to their educational outcomes.

Results from the National Survey of Student Engagement ([NSSE](#)) yield important information about the campus environment. CSU students rate the campus environment slightly higher than students at peer institutions. Specifically, the quality of interactions with students, advisors, and student services staff were ranked higher. Students also report higher levels of support for their overall well-being than do students at peer institutions, report being encouraged to have contact with diverse others, report having opportunities to be involved socially.

The Collaborative for Student Achievement delivers a continuum of co-curricular programs to support academic success and help students become self-directed learners.

- [The Community for Excellence](#) (C4E) is an inclusive community for students receiving select financial aid awards. Participation in the program includes mentoring and is shown to be associated with higher levels of student success. Student participants learn about the university resources available to support them and also learn the importance of self-advocacy.
- [Learning Communities](#) (LCs) bring cohorts of students together with structured integration of curricular (co-enrollment in classes) and co-curricular learning in order to provide a supportive, academically-focused environment that cultivates a sense of community and empowers students to become engaged citizens on campus and in the community. CSU offers both residential and non-residential communities. Participation in LCs is positively associated with higher levels of academic success. Additionally, students report gaining general education skills in communication, community building and leadership.
- [Early Performance Feedback](#) is a partnership program with faculty in large enrollment first year courses and student support staff. Faculty provide feedback about student performance and students who are identified as not yet meeting expectations are invited to a U-Turn event to find support and resources to improve their academic performance. Course participation results in a 2.8 percentage point increase in the predicted probability of a student being successful in a course. Importantly, this association between EPF and course success is nearly identical for students that are either first generation, Pell recipient or a student of color as well as for first-time students.
- The advising system, as re-envisioned in SSI, is described in detail in Criterion 3.D.3. [Undeclared students](#) outperform declared students with similar academic preparation.

Student Leadership, Involvement and Community Engagement (SLiCE) provides an important link between students and their surrounding communities. Being involved in SLiCE programs allows students to enrich their academic and social experience at CSU while providing opportunities for integrative learning.

- [Service Learning](#) combines service and academic learning to promote understanding while helping students develop knowledge, skills, and cognitive capacities to deal effectively with complex social issues and problems. [NSSE](#) results indicate more than half of respondents participate in service learning opportunities. The rate is even higher for minoritized student populations.
- There are [four formal leadership programs](#) through SLiCE including REAL which provides students the opportunity to attend drop-in leadership workshops at their convenience. Students can earn a Leadership Preparation Certification or attend a single workshop. REAL consists of ten core workshops which serve to contribute to students' awareness and competency in 8 areas:
  - Community Engagement
  - Ethics
  - Intellectual Development
  - Interpersonal Competence

- Intrapersonal Development
  - Leadership
  - Multicultural Competence
  - Practical Competence
- There for over 450 student organizations that offer the opportunity for students to explore interests, create networks and develop leadership skills.

Qualified students have opportunities to engage in [research and creative activity](#) through the Office of Undergraduate Research and Artistry. Some of these opportunities are in class but many are outside of their course work. These opportunities allow students to enhance their education by working closely with a faculty mentor. Settings for these activities include laboratory, office, concert hall, and studio environments on campus. Some opportunities exist off campus, as well, at state and national laboratories located in and near Fort Collins. The amount of time spent in such activities varies but generally ranges from 6-10 hours per week. The Multicultural Undergraduate Research Art and Leadership Symposium specifically engages minority students. [NSSE](#) results indicate higher participation rates in undergraduate research than is reported at peer institutions. National research indicates that these types of experiences promote integrative learning and foster the student-faculty relationship.

[The Institute for Learning and Teaching \(TILT\) learning programs](#) include academic success workshops, tutoring, study groups, the Writing Center and resources for disabled students. Outcomes indicate that students perform better academically after having participated in these services. For example, [tutoring participants](#) in Chemistry, Economics, Biology, Physics, and Statistics courses had significantly higher course grades, after controlling for academic preparation, than their peers in class who did not attend tutoring.

[Career Center](#) assists students in exploring careers, writing resumes, interviewing and finding internships/jobs. There are positive associations between career center services and important student engagement markers (as measured by the [NSSE](#)). Among students who visited the career center, more than half report talking about their career plans with a faculty member often or very often. Students who visit the career center are also more likely to participate in an internship, co-op or other work-related experience and are more likely to persist to graduation than students who did not utilize the services.

The Health Network is accredited by the [Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care](#) and the [American Psychological Association](#) and provides a full range of medical, mental health, and health education and prevention services to optimize the health of students and the campus community. The staff is composed of licensed medical providers, including board-certified physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, registered nurses and medical assistants, who are experienced with and passionate about college health and working with students to achieve their academic and personal goals. Services are open to all CSU students regardless of insurance plan. CSU Health Network is an in-network medical provider with most major insurance carriers and can file claims with private insurance.

- New students are required to complete the Haven: Understanding Sexual Assault™ Program, which educates students on issues associated with stalking, relationship violence



and sexual assault. Built in collaboration with leading researchers and practitioners, Haven is an interactive module designed to engage and empower students to create safe, healthy campus environments. This course meets the educational mandate of the 2013 Federal Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act.

- Students under age 23 must complete the AlcoholEdu for College Program. AlcoholEdu is an interactive, online program designed to educate students about how alcohol affects the body, mind, perceptions and behaviors. Students must score an 80% or higher on the AlcoholEdu final exam to pass the course. Students report that the course helps them establish a plan for responsible decisions around alcohol (pacing drinking, reducing frequency of drinking, reducing number of drinks etc.) and prepares them to identify and/or help someone who has alcohol poisoning.

The Student Recreation Center features a climbing wall, facilities for intramural sports, a challenge course, activity classes, fitness programs, aquatic center, a track, volleyball courts, tennis courts, and more. Several publications have listed the CSU Student Recreation Center in their “Best Of” lists, including *Men’s Health*, *Best Value Schools*, and *Best College Reviews*. The facility includes gender inclusive restrooms and locker rooms, a lactation room and Braille on a variety of fitness machines, as well as other inclusivity-minded features. Campus recreation has contributed to student learning in many ways including supervision of practicum experiences and trainings related to team building, leadership, inclusion and customer service. Further [usage](#) of the recreation center is positively correlated with higher GPA.

With few exceptions, CSU requires all first-year students to live in a university residence hall for the initial two consecutive terms of their attendance. There are 14 residence halls with a total of 6,264 beds. The fall 2017 occupancy rate was 98%. In the residence halls students develop their knowledge of university resources, their interpersonal skills and their experience with diverse others as they transition into young adulthood. [Assessment](#) indicates that first-year students residing in the halls typically have higher levels of success compared to peers that do not live on campus.

University apartments are also available for students who are not required to live on campus. Aggie Village, Aggie Village Family, the International House and University Village are home to both undergraduate and graduate students as well as postdocs and visiting scholars. Additionally, the Office of Off-Campus Life assists students with finding roommates but also with developing the life skills of understanding tenant rights/responsibilities, developing strategies for being a good neighbor, creating community and understanding applicable city ordinances.

All students are eligible to purchase meal plans or individual meals through Dining Services. There are ten options for dining on campus with a variety of foods to help students maintain their health and dietary restrictions. Dining facilities are located in the Lory Student Center and in or near each of the residence halls. The Eat Well @ CSU program provides nutrition education for students in a number of ways:

- Online menus include ingredient lists and allergen information for the foods served.
- Nutrition table cards provide tips to eating a well-balanced diet.



- Menu labels identify the nutrients in foods for dietary needs.
- Nutrition stations within every dining center offer information about making healthy dietary choices.
- A registered dietitian nutritionist conducts nutrition programs and classes for on-campus students throughout the year.

The mission of CSU Athletics is to educate, engage, and excel. There are sixteen intercollegiate sport programs. The success the Rams enjoy on the field or in the arena is secondary to the achievements of individual student-athletes in the classroom. All student-athletes are required to maintain their academics in order to play. CSU's 4-class graduation rate among student-athletes is higher than that of the general student population. Athletics includes a provision in all of its coaching contracts that requires that any bonuses based on competitive accomplishments are contingent upon the team's meeting or exceeding the minimum APR cut score and the program incurring no major NCAA violations. CSU has never been sanctioned by the NCAA for a major violation.

Student Athlete Support Services contributes student learning in a myriad of ways:

- The Lt. Col. John W. Mosley Student-Athlete Leadership Program assists African American student-athletes in strengthening time management skills, increasing academic success, providing leadership opportunities, and creating a sense of belonging and connection to the campus and its surrounding community. The objectives of the program are to reduce academic probation rates, increase retention rates and expose students to positive African American role models.
- 4 Year Career Plans target specific skills and experiences that integrate academic and professional development. The first year of the program, is about exploring the different opportunities each major has, including career fields, companies, and postgraduate education. The focus of the second year is to encourage and understand the importance of declaring a major. The third year emphasizes professional skills including networking, writing a resume/cover letter, how to dress in business attire and dinner etiquette. And finally, the fourth year begins process of transitioning out from being a student-athlete to an employee, a graduate student, or a professional athlete.
- Green and Global is a CSU staff-led service learning in which student-athletes meet with local community leaders, serve 15+ hours on need based service projects, and explore the country and culture through field trips, presentations, and community events. The program focuses on cultural immersion, social action, and community based learning.
- The tutoring staff communicates a rich knowledge of their designated core subject(s) during weekly sessions by using effective teaching methods for a variety of learning styles, all while practicing the highest level of academic integrity. Sessions can be scheduled on a weekly basis or as requested for review leading up to exams. The ultimate goal of SASS tutoring is to provide quality structured review of course material in a variety of subject areas meeting the needs of all student-athletes. Through consistent weekly meetings, student-athletes can improve content knowledge, study skills and confidence in the subject matter leading great performance in the course.
- Learning Resources are designed to support student-athletes who have individual learning challenges as they develop academic skills and progress towards academic independence.

The Learning Specialist partners with the entire Student-Athlete Support Services staff, the Senior Coordinator for Mental Health Service for Student-Athletes, and CSU's Student Disability Center office to identify specific needs of student-athletes and build an academic success plan. Resources offered include 1-on-1 Academic Skill Development session where student-athletes work with a Strategy Mentor to develop fundamental academic skills needed to be successful in college; 1-on-1 Academic Mentoring where students have the skill set work on effective application of those skills; and Directed Study Time (DST) where small groups of students will utilize the study space in the Anderson Academic Center.

- The Freshman Student-Athlete Seminar course and other new student-athlete orientation and summer bridge programs assist with the transition to university life, provide information about campus resources and set high academic expectations.

**3.E.2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.**

Students come to Colorado State University to earn a degree, but they leave with more than an academic credential. Whether the first destination is the job market, graduate school, military or Peace Corps service, what happens at CSU is transformational for students and personifies the land-grant heritage.

Assessment results from the [CLA+](#) indicate that Colorado State University's value add for students is slightly above what would be expected relative to schools testing similar populations of students.

In the 2016 National Survey of Student Engagement ([NSSE](#)) administration, 80% of CSU seniors rated the quality of their interactions with faculty members highly and 83% reported having talked with faculty about their career plans. Eighty percent of CSU seniors plan to do or have done an internship. Sixty-five percent of seniors said that their time at CSU has significantly improved their work-related knowledge and skills and 68% said that their experiences at CSU vastly improved their ability to work with others.

[First destination](#) survey results indicate 81% of graduates are employed or continuing their education after graduation. This rate is ten points higher than the national average. Three quarters of graduates are employed in a major related to their field of study. They are employed throughout the United States and in more than 50 countries around the globe. The average starting salary is \$45,000 after graduation and at ten years out, the average salary is over \$80,000 according to data from the [Colorado Department of Labor and Employment](#). Ninety percent of graduates would choose CSU again.

Forty-six percent of students graduate debt free. The average loan debt is \$25,345 for students who borrowed at some point during their time at CSU; \$13,138 across all graduates including those that did not borrow.

Economically, CSU alumni contribute in significant ways as [two recent economic impact studies](#) showed:

- 105,000 CSU alumni are working in every Colorado county and earned an estimated total of \$5.54 billion from their jobs in 2015.
- Among workers in Colorado, nearly 1 in 25 has a CSU degree, which significantly boosts their earning power over those who didn't graduate from college.
- CSU alumni in Colorado collectively earn \$2.2 billion more because of their college degrees.

For the fourth year in a row, Colorado State University ranks in the top 10 on the [Peace Corps' annual list of Top Volunteer-Producing College and Universities](#). The number of CSU alumni serving in the Peace Corps rose from 54 in 2017 to an all-time high 58 in 2018. As President Tony Frank has said, "CSU's strong connection to the Peace Corps is an example of our commitment to our land-grant heritage. We are proud to be among the top 10 universities producing Peace Corps volunteers, and we are especially proud of the impact our graduates are making on the state of Colorado, the United States and the world."

## Sources

---

- AUCC Curriculum
- Career Center Assessment
- Community for Excellence Assessment
- CSU Tuition Assistance Grant
- Early Performance Feedback Assessment
- Economic Impact Studies
- First Destination Report
- First Destination Slides
- GT Pathways SLOs
- Health Network AASHC Accreditation
- Health Network APA Accreditation
- ILO Recommendations
- Learning Communities Annual Report
- National Survey of Student Engagement Results
- Peace Corps
- Recreation Center Assessment
- Residence Life Assessment
- Slice Engagement
- Slice Leadership
- Spring 2016 CLA+
- Student Sexual Harassment and Violence Awareness
- TILT Learning Programs
- Tutoring Assessment
- Undeclared Advising Assessment
- Undergraduate Research Assessment

## 3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

---

The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

### Summary

---

#### Assurance Evidence Summary

The evidence, both described and attached for review, affirm CSU continues to meet the requirements of Criterion 3.

CSU offers high-quality educational experiences that link learning in the curricular and co-curricular spaces. It continually assesses the equivalency of student learning across locations and instructional modalities. The faculty are experts in their discipline and are, therefore, responsible for the learning outcomes in courses and programs and lead the discussion around institutional learning outcomes.

Updates since the last reaffirmation of accreditation include the following:

- Updates to the GT Pathways requirements and competencies.
- Creation of ILOs and re-envisioning the scaffolded structure of PLOs for disciplines, general education and student affairs to accomplish three things.
  - ILOs will describe what a CSU degree means.
  - Student Affairs will focus on PLOs that feed up to the ILOs.
  - AUCC review will ensure that the current distribution of credits evolve into a cohesive general education program with appropriate PLOs.
- NTT-faculty ranks approved by Faculty Council to create a promotional ladder and provide more job security.
- Implementation of Digital Measures to centrally document faculty accomplishments and credentials.

Student learning and quality teaching is central to goals 1-4 of the University Strategic Plan as well as goals 7 and 8.

## 4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

---

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

## 4.A - Core Component 4.A

---

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

### Argument

---

#### 4.A.1 The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.

CSU understands that maintaining excellent educational programs is critical to the value of a CSU degree and that maintaining a meaningful quality assurance process is important to both improvement and accountability. During the last site visit, the program review process was undergoing significant change. The [schedule](#) and a [summary](#) of the completed process are provided to the BOG annually.

The program review process was originally institutionalized through [University policy](#) which requires periodic reviews to evaluate (1) departmental operations and (2) academic quality. Further, [Board policy](#) requires program reviews at a minimum of every seven years. Every effort is made to align institutional reviews with specialized accreditation cycles where they exist. Oversight for the program review process is the responsibility of the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness.

Foremost, the [academic program review process](#) is intended as an opportunity for units to, with broad faculty participation, reflect upon their programs and incorporate assessment and continuous improvement into their standard processes. To assist in this process, units are asked to consider both internal and external feedback on their current state and future plans.

The program review template was updated since the last comprehensive visit and is now organized into the following sections to help guide the reflective process. The [FY17 Sociology program review](#) is attached as an example.

### Section I Departmental Operations

The Unit has the opportunity to evaluate the human resources, facilities, work environment, organization and administration of the department and other aspects of departmental operations with an eye toward making CSU the best possible place to work and learn. Note that this component is not an evaluation of the performance of the department head, which is a responsibility of the Dean.

### Section II Student Success

This section asks faculty to consider how multiple factors contribute to student success.

**Program Learning Outcomes:** Academic programs are defined, per the faculty manual, as “coherent sets of academic activities with specified goals” that lead to a CCHE-approved degree/certificate (applies to all undergraduate and graduate programs). The specified goals are operationalized in the review process as program-level student learning outcomes (PLOs). There should be a minimum of four PLOs that describe the disciplinary knowledge, competencies, skills, and values that students will be expected to attain after completing their program of study. Each PLO must be sufficiently specific to differentiate the program from all other programs and degree levels on campus. The PLOs as a group should be used to determine the ideal shape of the curriculum, which should be designed to help students master PLOs. Evidence of assurance that PLOs are being attained should be reviewed and provided. Evidence should include both direct and indirect assessment results. [Example PLOs](#) are attached for Political Science and Interior Design.

**High Impact Practices (HIPs):** HIPs are defined as instructional approaches (including specific characteristics) that require students to more actively and intensively engage in their own learning and have been found to correlate positively with deepened learning, increased academic achievement, and persistence to graduation. Units should reflect upon how, when, and to what extent HIPs or the characteristics of HIPs are integrated in their degree programs, in particular by considering how effectively the current use of HIPs helps students to master SLOs. It is not envisioned that all CSU courses will, or should, integrate HIP characteristics to the degree required for designation as a High-Impact Practice course. Instead, thoughtfully chosen courses with crucial roles in student success may be so designated, while other courses may incorporate HIP characteristics as appropriate.

**Retention, Persistence and Graduation:** Units should be aware of the retention, persistence and graduation rates for all students (undergraduate and graduate) as well as subgroups of students (minority, Pell Grant recipients, first-generation etc.) and should consider how the design of the curriculum influences these rates. Developing this understanding requires a review of major migration patterns (for undergraduates), stop-out patterns, and the intentionality within the Unit to ensure that students successfully complete their degree program.

Outcomes after Graduation: Assurance that graduates are prepared for life after CSU should be provided. Evidence of success could include, but is not limited to, employment rates (including volunteerism and military service), wages, and further education admissions as well as employer and alumni survey results. If available, evidence of how curriculum and instructional practices contribute to success after graduation should be provided. Such evidence could include, but is not limited to, student survey responses and other qualitative feedback indicating the usefulness of specific courses or instructional approaches.

Curriculum: The curriculum should be reviewed to ensure that it is aligned with SLOs, relevant to the current and near future state of the discipline, and not overly complex. The review should consider how well the curriculum is structured to help students to achieve SLOs through the use of High-Impact Practices (HIPs) and other approaches, so as to improve retention, persistence, and graduation rates, as well as outcomes after graduation. For undergraduate programs, the “Eight Semester Plan” should be provided and reviewed for how frequently courses are offered, the timing of those offerings, and the number of prerequisite courses to complete the degree.

### Section III Research and Creative Artistry

Faculty have an opportunity to reflect on their excellence and growth in research, creative artistry, and other scholarly accomplishments as they are central to the mission of CSU. Inputs and outputs (research expenditures, publications, performances, citations, etc.) are important, but so is the reflection of the Unit’s impact on local and regional communities and reach across national and international boundaries.

### Section IV Inclusive Excellence

The University recognizes the importance and value of more thoroughly integrating diversity into the campus culture. Respect for diversity, inclusivity and the value of every individual is central to ensuring that CSU is the foremost institution at which to work and/or learn. In order to truly be inclusive, attention must be drawn to the depth and breadth of the diversity represented on campus. This includes age, culture, ideas and perspectives, disability, ethnicity, first generation status, familial status, gender identity and expression, geographic background, marital status, national origin, race, religious and spiritual beliefs, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and veteran status. Faculty have the opportunity in this section of the program review to discuss how diversity and inclusivity add value to the Unit and academic program(s) therein and identify opportunities for improvement.

### Section V Engagement and Outreach

CSU strives to engage with people and communities to solve problems, share knowledge, and support progress. It serves as a resource for individuals and communities, both locally and globally, to foster community and economic development, civic engagement and an enhanced quality of life. This section of the program review is an opportunity to summarize how the Unit collaborates with stakeholders to share knowledge and/or resources and contribute to community and cultural quality. Examples may include dissemination of research and knowledge (outreach), or student/faculty participation in collaborative, reciprocal and mutually beneficial partnerships.



This reflection could include activities related, but not limited to, extension, collaborative research, co-creation of programming, economic development, diverse communities or civic engagement. Descriptions should document how these programs support student learning outcomes, faculty research, curriculum development or other departmental goals. Quantitative or qualitative assessments of stakeholder impacts are also relevant.

#### Section VI Planning for Improvement

What are the Unit's major initiatives that, if accomplished, have the potential to improve incrementally the Unit and the degree programs delivered? How do they related to the University Strategic Plan? For example, initiatives may address challenges found in the review process, may focus on disciplinary changes/advances or may be related to the overall climate of the Unit. The Unit will monitor progress on the strategic initiatives annually and will relate them to other department or college strategic plans as appropriate.

After the completion of the self-study, each department is assigned an Internal Review Committee that consists of three faculty from outside the department as well as representatives from the Provost's Office, the Graduate School, the Office of the Vice President for Diversity, the Office of Engagement, the Office of the Vice President for Research and The Institute for Learning and Teaching. The composition of the committee is intentionally representative of every aspect of campus to signal to departments that program review is valued across the institution. The Committee provides constructive feedback for the department's consideration as they move forward with their planning.

At the end of the process, a two-page executive summary is submitted to the Board as evidence of the process and of ongoing improvements. Executive summaries for [Statistics](#) and [Health and Exercise Science](#) are attached for review.

Actions coming from program review include curricular enhancements, student success interventions, the creation/discontinuance of programs/courses, faculty hiring plans, departmental code updates, etc.

**4.A.2 The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.**

See criterion 4.A.3.

**4.A.3 The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.**

CSU has extensive policies and procedures for the evaluation of transfer credit and other forms of prior learning that are disclosed in the [General Catalog](#), the [Graduate and Professional Bulletin](#) and online. Most regular academic courses from regionally accredited institutions of higher education are accepted in transfer. To aid prospective students in determining [transfer course equivalencies](#), the Registrar provides access to transferology.com which enables prospective students to obtain

consistent and accurate information about how courses will transfer from another institution into majors at CSU and how those courses will apply toward graduation requirements.

Credit for prior learning is accepted through The College Board Advanced Placement Program, College-Level Examination Program and International Baccalaureate examinations. Policies and procedures also provide minimum standards for students to obtain credit from international transfer, Service Schools and Courses of the Armed Services and some non-collegiate institutions. The Registrar's Office also has policies for awarding Prior Service credit in the Military Science Minor, and for a Fire and Emergency Services Administration (FESA) program challenge exam for portfolio review for credit.

Students are encouraged to participate in accredited education abroad programs. Credit is granted for courses taken in programs approved, in advance, by the University.

Credit may be transferred to a graduate program at CSU with the approval of the adviser and committee as well as the Graduate School. There is no right to transfer credits; each case is assessed individually and accepted or rejected on its merits. The number of credits that may be transferred is limited. Additional details are provided in the Graduate and Professional Bulletin.

**4.A.4 The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.**

The University has policies and procedures that guide academic units in their curricular decisions. The following examples illustrate:

- Prerequisites for courses: Prerequisites are established through the University Curriculum Committee course proposal and review process concluding with Faculty Council approval. Through the student information system, the Registrar enforces prerequisite requirements at the time of registration for courses. However, final responsibility for enforcing prerequisites is delegated to the academic departments through authority to waive prerequisites for students deemed to be otherwise adequately prepared for the course.
- Rigor of courses: Initial course rigor is evaluated through the regular course proposal and review. Oversight and maintenance of the rigor is delegated to the academic units as they are responsible to assign qualified instructors, review student course surveys, and assess learning outcomes.
- Expectations for student learning: As described in Component 4.B.1, goals for student learning are established for all programs and courses in the UCC process. Maintenance of the outcomes and assessment of attainment is the responsibility of the departments and reviewed in the program review process.
- Access to learning resources: The identification of learning resources, such as textbooks, handouts, reserve library materials, laboratory guides, etc. is deferred to the course instructor after initial approval of the course. The instructor and department are responsible

for communicating such requirements to the Libraries, bookstore, and other units as appropriate.

- Faculty qualifications: The assessment of instructor qualifications and assignment to teach courses is the responsibility of the academic department (described in more detail in Component 3.C).

See Criterion 3.A.3 for details about concurrent enrollment.

One minor exception to prerequisite enforcement is allowed for courses taken through the Division of Continuing Education. Before distance students are fully matriculated as degree-seeking candidates, they are allowed to explore the distance-education option by enrolling online for a course. This self-selection process bypasses the usual transcript evaluation for prerequisite requirements.

#### **4.A.5 The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.**

Specialized accreditation is maintained by 34 programs through 18 accrediting agencies. These accreditations serve as important indicators of quality to the public, employers, students and other constituents. Through the process of self-study and external peer review for specialized accreditation, emphasis is placed on the quality of student learning within the discipline, assessment of learning, and continuous improvement of academic programs. As a result, the process ensures that programs are incorporating or aspiring to best practices. Specialized accreditation reviews also supplement internal program reviews. The most recent specialized accreditation notifications are attached.

#### **4.A.6 The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and AmeriCorps).**

[The First-Destination Survey](#) (FDS) is the institution's traditional method for obtaining information about students' plans after graduation including further education, employment and salary. The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) First-Destination Survey Standards and Protocols provides best practices for survey administration and allows for national benchmarking. Collaboration between the Career Center, the Registrar's Office and the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness since the last reaffirmation visit has served to shorten the FDS, streamline the process, and increase what is known about graduates.

In addition to a well-designed and administered FDS, NACE has endorsed, and CSU has adopted, additional data collection methods to increase the overall knowledge rate about graduates' outcomes. NACE encourages a knowledge rate goal of 65%, but by employing multiple data sources, CSU has attained a knowledge rate of about 75%. Beyond increasing the knowledge rate,

triangulating data from multiple sources serves to increase confidence in the results. The following data sources are used:

- National Student Clearinghouse (NSC): The NSC StudentTracker includes about 98% of all postsecondary enrollment within the United States and allows the institution to identify graduates who enrolled in further education. This not only increases the knowledge rate and triangulates the self-reported data from the FDS, it also allows for exclusion of those students when figuring an average wage after graduation. Graduates continuing their education are typically underemployed, if employed at all, and do not provide an accurate portrayal of wage outcomes. However, they should still be counted as successful graduates for reporting purposes.
- Unemployment Insurance (UI): The Colorado Department of Labor and Employment matches recent graduates to its unemployment insurance records through a memorandum of understanding negotiated by the Colorado Department of Higher Education. However, there are limitations to this approach. The largest limitation is that it only provides data for graduates employed in-state. Additionally, employees in certain sectors are not captured in the data set (e.g. federal employees).
- LinkedIn: LinkedIn reports there are 39 million students or recent graduates subscribed to their tool. LinkedIn can provide data for recent graduates employed out of state that can be otherwise difficult, if not impossible, to obtain. Validation efforts are made to ensure the accuracy and recency of LinkedIn data.

Most recent results indicate that 85% of CSU graduates secure their [first destination plans](#) within six months of graduation. They earn an average salary of about \$48,000 their first year out and an average salary of near \$80,000 10 years out. One in five graduates continues his/her education at one of hundreds of unique institutions while 64% enter the workforce. Eighty-four percent of graduates were employed in a job related to their career plans. CSU continues to produce graduates who are civically and globally engaged; [CSU ranks 10th in Peace Corps volunteerism](#). CSU graduates are successful by a variety of measures.

All CSU graduate certificates comply with [Gainful Employment](#) reporting mandates. All disclosures and results are available online.

## Sources

---

- Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business
- Academic Program Review Board Policy
- Accreditation Committee of the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians
- Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics
- Accrediting Council On Education in Journalism and Mass Communications
- American Animal Hospital Association
- American Chemical Society
- American Council for Construction Education
- American Psychological Association

- American Veterinary Medical Association Council on Education
- Applied Science Accreditation Commission of ABET
- Association for Fire Ecology
- Colorado Dept of Higher Education Educator Preparation
- Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education
- Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs
- Council for Interior Design Accreditation
- Council for Occupational Therapy Accreditation
- Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation
- Council on Education for Public Health
- Council on Social Work Education BSW
- Council on Social Work Education MSW
- Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET
- First Destination Report
- First Destination Slides
- First Destination Survey
- Gainful Employment Disclosures
- Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board
- Learning Outcomes
- National Academy for Early Childhood Program Accreditation
- National Association of Schools of Music
- Peace Corps
- Program Review Context and Timeline
- Program Review Schedule AY17-18
- Program Review Summary for Health and Exercise Science
- Program Review Summary for Statistics
- Program Review Summary Memo to BOG
- Society for Range Management
- Society of American Foresters Committee on Accreditation
- Sociology Program Review
- Teacher Education Accreditation Council
- Transfer Equivalency

## **4.B - Core Component 4.B**

---

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

## Argument

---

### **4.B.1 The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.**

While Criterion 4 was met without concern in the [last reaffirmation](#), it was recognized that CSU could take steps to further define and assess student learning outcomes. Significant progress has been made to do so. The institution recognizes that student learning takes place at a variety of levels on campus: course, program, and institutional. The assessment process is evolving to reflect that recognition.

- Course student learning outcomes (SLOs) are required by the University Curriculum Committee (UCC) as [course proposals](#) are submitted for review. An example [course syllabus](#) is provided as evidence.
- [Program learning outcomes](#) (PLOs) and a corresponding assessment plan are a required component of all new program proposals. The PLOs for all majors are described in the [General Catalog](#). Also in the Catalog, the General education student learning outcomes are clearly stated for the All University Core Curriculum ([AUCC](#)). Increasingly, the Division of Student Affairs is identifying PLOs for their activities.
- [Institutional learning outcomes](#) (ILOs) are currently in development based on the AAC&U Essential Learning Outcomes, and examples in the Voluntary System of Accountability and the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment. The ILOs will tie directly to the mission and values of CSU, encourage thoughtful integration across disciplines and acknowledge both cognitive and attitudinal outcomes that reflect an education obtained from Colorado's land grant university. They will overarch discipline-specific, general education, and co-curricular learning outcomes. Discussion of ILOs began in summer 2017 at a Provost's Retreat. There it was discussed by a relatively small number of faculty and staff. That fall, the discussion was taken up by Faculty Council where a dialogue is still ongoing. The ILOs are anticipated to be finalized in 2018 and subsequently included in the General Catalog.

### **4.B.2 The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.**

Assessment of student learning is complex. As the discussion below illustrates, at CSU, assessment is present in both curricular and co-curricular experiences, it is centralized and decentralized, and includes both quantitative and qualitative methods. The following examples are provided as evidence that assessment of student learning is integrated into the culture of the institution.

#### Direct Assessment

[Collegiate Learning Assessment Plus](#) (CLA+): The CLA+ is a direct measure of student learning that helps to estimate the value-add of a CSU education to students' higher-order thinking skills. Growth estimates and peer benchmarks assess critical-thinking and written communication skills. Given the mean CLA+ performance of Colorado State University's seniors and the entering

academic ability of its freshman, CSU's value-add is slightly above what would be expected relative to schools testing similar populations of students.

[Internship/Employer Survey](#): Many academic programs request feedback about student performance from internship providers and employers. This direct assessment of student learning ensures the curriculum is current and that students are well prepared to demonstrate the skills and knowledge necessary in their discipline.

Doctoral Candidacy Examination and Thesis/Dissertation Defense: While the pass/fail rates of candidacy examinations and defenses are indicative of overall student learning, many programs have moved to employ [rubrics](#) to standardize the assessment and more precisely understand which learning outcomes are met and to what degree.

Capstone Experience: Every undergraduate program of study is required to include a [capstone experience](#) that consists of a designated course or sequence of courses that offer the opportunity for integrative and reflective learning. Many of the capstone experiences require a culminating examination or project. The projects vary in nature from service learning in the community to laboratory research with a faculty member. Additionally, a recent [master's thesis](#) comparing the long-term outcomes of capstone experiences is attached. This project has served to help further discussions about the quality across capstone experiences.

[Portfolio](#) and [Reflection](#): While the effort and time involved in portfolio and/or reflections is significant, many programs are moving in this direction because of its qualitative aspect. The process provides students an opportunity to demonstrate integrative and reflective learning from a very personal perspective.

Peer-Reviewed Publications/Presentations: Having work that is peer-reviewed is a valuable assessment of student learning. This is true even if the publication/presentation is not accepted, as the student has experts in the discipline providing feedback. Many programs require Ph.D. candidates to prepare and submit a manuscript for publication in a peer-reviewed scientific journal with the student as first author.

Licensure/Certification Examination Pass Rates: Multiple programs on campus prepare students for disciplinary licensure/certification. For those programs, examination pass rates are part of their assessment plans (e.g.: [Teacher Education](#))

### Indirect Assessment

Student Course Survey: The Faculty Council Standing Committee on Teaching and Learning (CoTL), with financial support from the Provost, commissioned a study in AY16. Faculty from the Department of Industrial and Organizational Psychology led the study, which included public fora for faculty, staff, and students, focus groups and research on best practice student course surveys. This work confirmed the suspicions of CoTL that there is widespread dissatisfaction with the design and use of the current course survey (both students and faculty share this view). The campus study is confirmed by extant published work on these tools. In December 2016, Faculty Council formally charged CoTL (in collaboration with the IO Psychology faculty) with a two-



phased approach to improving the survey. The survey itself aims to shift the emphasis from a "rate the instructor" approach to student-centered approach that will inform improvements in the learning environment and in pedagogy. It is not intended to be used for administrative purposes such as annual evaluation and promotion/tenure reviews. The [new survey](#) will be fully online and integrated into the learning management system for each course. Implementation phases are as follows:

Phase 1: The design of a "core" survey that would be appropriate for any setting/class-size, etc. This survey was piloted in December 2017.

Phase 2: Add modular blocks of questions to the "core" survey that are more discipline or course section specific (lecture vs. flipped, humanities vs STEM, etc.).

[National Survey of Student Engagement](#) (NSSE): The NSSE is a national survey used to better understand the extent to which students engage in educational practices associated with high levels of learning and personal development. It allows for internal trend analysis as well as benchmark analysis with peers and serves as an indirect measure of student learning. In the most recent administration, first-year students reported levels of academic challenge and peer learning at or above that reported at other large land grant institutions. Seniors also reported higher levels of reflective and integrative learning, quantitative reasoning, and collaborative learning than their peers. However, senior results were slightly below their peers for their use of learning strategies and participation in discussions with diverse others. Both freshman and seniors reported effective teaching practices at CSU at a level similar to our peers.

[Job Placement Rates](#): Each year there is an institutional effort to understand the first destination of graduates. Employment rates are an indirect measure of student learning. The institutional knowledge rate is above the national average as detailed in Criterion 4.A.6. In addition to reporting those rates online, the institution fully complies with U.S. Department of Education's Gainful Employment reporting mandates/disclosures.

[Graduation Rates](#): Graduation rates have increased in recent years from 63% to 68% for undergraduates and are used as an indirect measure of overall student learning. During the program review process, faculty in each department are required to review the graduation rates for their programs. They are also required to review the rates for sub-populations as part of efforts to close attainment gaps. If gaps are identified, they are asked to provide insights as to why and present plans for mitigation. In this way, the goals of the SSI-2 are integrated into departmental plans for improvement.

#### **4.B.3 The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.**

The results of the assessments described above are used in the improvement processes across campus in every college and throughout student affairs. The examples below are provided as evidence of the institution's use of formative and summative assessment results.

### New Courses/Programs

As a result of insights gained through formal and informal assessments by faculty, hundreds of curricular course changes (range of 500-1100 formal requests per year to the UCC) are implemented annually and an average of four new academic degree programs are approved. These curricular adjustments are evidence of the faculty's understanding of both student learning and the state of their discipline.

### Curricular Redesign

Historically, curricular redesign was completed one course at a time and was usually based on faculty assessment of student learning in that particular course. In recent years, The Institute for Learning and Teaching (TILT) has shifted to focus on curricular redesign that includes multiple courses in a series and that is departmentally owned as opposed to faculty owned. The advantages to this shift are multifaceted. Understanding student learning in a broader context within the discipline serves to benefit the student in a depth not possible within just one course. Additionally, when the department owns the redesign the innovations are retained regardless of which faculty member teaches the course(s). Since the creation of TILT, as part of the original Student Success Initiative, many courses have been redesigned employing the science of learning in pedagogical approaches and embedding strategies for increasing student engagement in active learning. The most recent [TILT](#) annual report is attached and describes its impact.

### High Impact Practices

Beginning in earnest in 2015, broad campus discussions began around increasing the integration of high impact practices (HIPs) into every student's educational experience at CSU. Initial discussions led to an inventory of curricular and co-curricular high impact practices and a website devoted to resources on the topic. Throughout 2016 and 2017, rubrics were created for use by [faculty](#) and [staff](#) that describe the characteristics of HIPs and provide examples of practices. Those rubrics have been broadly distributed and are included in the program review process as resources for faculty. The HIPs characteristics are also now included in the Curriculum Information Management System for use in course development. As faculty create or refresh courses, they are asked to consider how HIP characteristics could be included to promote student achievement of both course and program-level learning outcomes. In 2017, an analysis of CSU HIPs was completed. Eighty-five percent of seniors participate in one or more HIP's, according to [NSSE results](#), which is higher than the peer participation rates.

### Learning Ecology

By leveraging campus resources and expertise, the responsibility for student learning is distributed across campus instead of isolating it to faculty in the classroom. Not only does this allow faculty time and energy to focus on research and service, it also benefits student learning. Specifically, this approach is used to leverage expertise in the Division of Student Affairs and the Office of the Vice President for Diversity related to student development and identity to help inform teaching strategies that will eliminate attainment gaps for first-generation and minoritized student populations. Fully integrating student affairs and diversity leadership into student success

initiatives and curricular discussions helps faculty to better understand how even small changes could have a large impact for sub-populations of students. For example, staff have been involved in conversations about intentionally creating inclusive classrooms and course content so that diverse students can see themselves in the accomplishments of their discipline. Co-curricular learning outcomes are detailed in Criterion 3.E.1. This ecology approach is central to the function and structure of the Student Success Initiative ([SSI](#) and [SSI-2](#)). Another example is the composition of the program review University Review Committee (URC). The [URC](#) includes broad representation in an effort to increase departmental awareness of resources from around campus.

### Learning Analytics

Within the curriculum, faculty use in-course formative assessments to tailor lectures, discussions, and assignments to fit the learning environment and context of each section. One example of this is the [Early Performance Feedback](#) (EPF) program where faculty provide performance feedback to students within the first four weeks of class. This allows both students and faculty to adjust if needed. In fall 2017, there were 325 sections across 32 courses that participated in EPF. While all courses are eligible to participate, specific recruitment involved the 10 courses most highly statistically associated with graduation. Course participation in the EPF program was associated with 37% higher odds of a student earning a successful grade (A, B or C) in the course after controlling for student demographics and academic preparation.

Another example of in-course formative assessment is an increasing use of behavioral data through the learning management system. Data within courses is being mined to identify behaviors associated with high levels of success. The results are used to intervene with students who are not exhibiting those behaviors. This type of analytics is in its infancy and is being conducted through IRB protocols to ensure results can be shared out. In 2018, the Committee on Teaching and Learning (a Faculty Council standing committee) developed Ethical [Principles for Learning Analytics](#) to guide the expanding use of this type of data. The [Center for the Analytics of Learning and Teaching](#) is a research center at Colorado State University facilitating faculty-driven research projects that use academic analytics, learning analytics and educational data mining methods to investigate questions related to learning and teaching. It was created to promote the awareness of, and advance the potential for, learning analytics within local learning communities. It serves as a place where faculty, staff, and administrators can join to expand their understanding of learning analytics and connect their projects to CSU's resources.

Additionally, more traditional examples of formative curricular assessment are the use of clickers, quizzes, and surveys in class to gauge content knowledge.

Since the last reaffirmation visit, the institution joined the [Unizin Consortium](#) which has a principal focus on large-scale learning analytics. CSU is in its second term of piloting the [LoudSight Learning Analytics](#) product under the auspices of LoudCloud that presents dashboards to faculty, students and advisors for risk prediction in individual courses, fusing demographic student data from Banner with in-course data from Canvas. There is no other product akin to LoudSight on the marketplace today, especially with a cross-course advisor dashboard. LoudSight is an opt-in choice by faculty, and is used to initiate text message alerts to students who exceed a certain

threshold of risk. Institutional pilots have shown improved student performance for students who were sent automated alerts. It has been well received by faculty in both pilots. Future plans including scaling up the use of LoudSight, with special attention to lower division courses, where students may benefit most from such an advanced tool.

**4.B.4 The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.**

The University has demonstrated a substantial and enduring commitment to the assessment of student learning. The Executive Director for Assessment and Research in Student Affairs and the Vice Provost for Planning and Effectiveness work collaboratively to oversee effective and efficient processes that inform continuous quality improvement campus-wide.

The use of nationally standardized tools, such as the CLA+ and NSSE, are one demonstration of how the institution follows and adopts best practices. Another is the use of LEAP rubrics in the assessment of general education. The LEAP agenda and resources from exemplar institutions are also informing ongoing discussions around the development of ILOs. Additionally, just prior to the last comprehensive HLC review, the program review and planning processes were migrated to Campus Labs' Compliance Assist from a homegrown online tool, further demonstrating the institutional desire to stay current with best practices.

Faculty and staff across campus participate in the development and assessment of student learning outcomes. Primarily, faculty are responsible for defining course, degree and general education learning outcomes. They are also responsible for assessing student learning at each level and using the results to make incremental improvements to their program(s) of study. During the program review process, at least three faculty members from outside the department participating in the process provide feedback about the learning outcomes and the assessment plans. Since 2014, about half of the academic departments on campus have completed the review process. Faculty and staff from the University Curriculum Committee provide support for course and program creation or revision including helping to ensure that appropriate learning outcomes are explicitly stated.

Assessment of student learning in the Division of Student Affairs largely reflects the general education outcomes of the AUCC and the ILOs currently under development as described in Criterion 3.E.1.

## Sources

---

- 1046 20131104 Continued Accreditation - Team Report
- AUCC Curriculum
- Capstone Project
- Center for the Analytics of Learning and Teaching
- Dissertation Defense Rubric
- Early Performance Feedback Assessment

- First Destination Report
- FSHN Employer Survey
- HORT 100 Syllabus S18
- ILO Recommendations
- Learning Outcomes
- LENS Recommendations
- Loudsight Pilot
- National Survey of Student Engagement Results
- New Course Proposal
- NSSE HIPs
- Principal Portfolio
- Principles of Learning Analytics
- Reflection Essay
- Retention Study
- Rubric for HIP Co-Curricular Experiences
- Rubric for HIP for Faculty
- Sociology Capstone Comparison
- Spring 2016 CLA+
- SSI Final Report
- SSI-2 Plan
- Teacher Education Pass Rates
- TILT Annual Report
- University Review Committee
- Unizin Agreement

## **4.C - Core Component 4.C**

---

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

## Argument

---

### **4.C.1 The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.**

In 2006, Colorado State University began implementation of a plan to increase student success by creating and implementing new support strategies while at the same time changing institutional culture and structure. Faculty, staff, administrators, and students from across campus collaborated in the design and implementation of the Student Success Initiative ([SSI](#)) while data and analysis provided essential insights and strategic direction.

Ten years later, CSU has a comprehensive array of strategies in place, each demonstrating evidence of effectiveness. The two overall goals of the plan are 1) a 70% six-year graduation rate and 2) closing attainment gaps after accounting for prior preparation. These goals are on target to be attained by 2020. Equally important, student success has become part of CSU's institutional identity and the roles of faculty and staff, so that decisions across the University are routinely made with student learning and success as driving values.

Throughout FY17, version two of the SSI ([SSI-2](#)) was planned with new and even more ambitious goals.

- 80% six-year graduation
- 60% four-year graduation
- absolute elimination of graduation attainment gaps

The goals of both SSI and SSI-2 are appropriate for a land-grant university. They pay close attention to first-generation and/or minoritized students' success, and are anchored in the belief that rates of success (retention, persistence, and completion) are by-products of deep learning and high levels of student engagement. That anchoring belief has created and sustained the commitment of faculty and staff over time. CSU has been recognized nationally for its work around student success in the 21st century through [Project Degree Completion](#).

### **4.C.2 The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.**

The institution complies with all state and federal mandates for reporting. IPEDS data are available through the IPEDS Data Center and [Data Feedback Reports](#) with peer comparisons also available in the Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness (IRP&E) [Fact Book](#).

Additionally, an interactive reporting tool is publicly available on the [IRP&E website](#) that allows for drill down to populations and metrics not represented in IPEDS. Data includes:

- [Retention, persistence, and graduation](#) rates
- Gap analyses
- Time to graduation by student demographics

- Major migration within CSU by student demographics
- Performance Contract goals
- [Student Success Key Performance Indicators](#)
- Research briefs related to student success

CSU is also a member of the Educational Advisory Board's Student Success Collaborative. This membership allows access to course and demographic analyses as well as [predictive models](#). Model validations indicate an accuracy rate above 80%. The models result in a "Support Priority Score" that advisors can use to triage support services to students that may require them most.

There are a variety of research briefs and analyses available through the [IRP&E website](#) that address the efficacy of specific strategies and interventions related to student success. Some of these are at the course/program level and others are at the institutional level (ex: [remediation](#), [course completion](#), and [foundational courses](#)).

#### **4.C.3 The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.**

Turning data into actionable information and using that information to create strategic and systemic institutional change is critical. EDUCAUSE and the Association for Institutional Research have both recognized CSU as an exemplar institution in the use of data by publishing four blogs ([one](#), [two](#), [three](#), [four](#)) describing how the institution has used data to inform change in many areas; financial aid, foundational courses, use of predictive analytics, learning communities etc.

Multiple times each month the Provost's Advisory for Student Success (PASS) meets to discuss national trends in student success, efficacy of the [SSI](#) and [SSI-2](#) and the data behind those initiatives. Many of the resulting research briefs are available [online](#) and have influenced both conversations and budget support for students (academically and personally) to and through graduation. Examples of program changes include the expansion of Key Communities, expansion of C4E, changes to financial aid distribution policies and the creation of the admissions priority support flag.

#### **4.C.4 The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice.**

The University consistently reviews its methodologies for reporting enrollment, retention and graduation data and has made adjustments as necessary to better reflect CDHE and IPEDS definitions where appropriate. While the IPEDS definition of a cohort does not fully reflect all new undergraduates, it does reflect the vast majority because such a small number of new undergraduates are part-time or start in the spring. Best practices include understanding the success of the IPEDS cohort but also of all other students. See Criterion 4.C.3 for additional details.



About 10% of an entering class will eventually transfer from CSU and complete a degree at another institution, making the federally defined graduation rate an artificially low metric of the success of students who start their college education at CSU. Understanding this, the institution frequently uses the National Student Clearinghouse to more completely understand the [success of students](#) who start their educational journey at CSU. This reflects best practices by considering educational attainment as a success even if it happens after a student leaves CSU.

The institution also participates in a variety of national initiatives and organizations to keep current with best practices. Examples include the following:

- EDUCAUSE iPASS convenings
- EAB webinars and meetings
- NASH's Taking Student Success to Scale (TS3)
- Professional meetings (NACUBA, AIR, AACRAO, APLU, etc.)
- [Lumina Foundation projects](#)

The Reinvention Collaborative, a national consortium of research universities dedicated to strengthening undergraduate education, has been housed at CSU since 2013 and each of the Specialized Networks has a co-chair at CSU. This relationship allows CSU faculty and staff unique opportunities to interact with other institutions to discuss challenges and share best practices. The Collaborative allows CSU to lead and to benefit from national discussions centered on student learning.

## Sources

---

- AIR Blog
- APLU Project Degree Completion Award Finalists
- Course Completion Brief
- EAB Risk Model Report
- Early Performance Feedback Assessment
- EDUCAUSE Blog 1
- EDUCAUSE Blog 2
- EDUCAUSE Blog 3
- Fact Book
- Institutional Research Planning and Effectiveness
- IPEDS Data Feedback Report
- Lumina Strategic Finance Project
- Math and Composition Brief
- Recreation Center Assessment
- Remediation Brief
- Retention Study
- SSI Final Report
- SSI-2 Plan
- Student Success Summary
- VSA College Portrait

## 4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

---

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

### Summary

---

#### Assurance Evidence Summary

The evidence, both described and attached for review, affirm that CSU continues to comply with the requirements of Criterion 4.

CSU takes seriously its responsibility for maintaining high quality curricular and co-curricular programs. The curriculum is rigorous and student learning is assessed continuously. Assessment results are formally reviewed in the program review process and evidence that they are used in quality improvement processes is required. Programs within the Division of Student Affairs support the AUCC (general education) learning outcomes, especially those related to communication and multiculturalism. The institution relies heavily on data to inform conversations related to student success for all students and is focused on eliminating attainment gaps for subpopulations of students that have historically been at risk for attrition.

Updates since the last reaffirmation visit include the following:

- Significant improvements to the program review process, including
  - A focus on student learning and outcomes after graduation
  - Inclusion of the Vice President for Diversity and The Institute for Learning and Teaching on the review committee
- Initial drafting of Institutional Learning Outcomes and a more connected approach to learning in the discipline, in the AUCC, and in the co-curricular experiences
- The adoption of a rubric to help faculty and staff incorporate high impact characteristics into courses and experiences

The institution continues to make advances in the assessment of student learning and the use of those assessment results in its quality improvement processes with the goals of deepening learning and increasing student engagement. Teaching and learning are central to goals 1-4 of the University Strategic Plan as well as to Goals 7 and 8.

## 5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

---

The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

### 5.A - Core Component 5.A

---

The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.
3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.
4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.
5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

### Argument

---

**5.A.1 The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.**

#### Fiscal Resources

In 2017, [Moody's Investors Service](#) assigned an Aa3 rating to the Colorado State University System planned fixed rate System Enterprise Revenue Refunding Bonds and to the Series 2017E Bonds. The Aa3 rating reflects CSU's mission as the land grant institution for the State of Colorado, \$1.2 billion scope of operations, and significant research enterprise. Additional factors cited were steady student demand, sound growth of net tuition revenue, favorable capital campaign results, strong fiscal stewardship, and successful execution of substantial campus investments.

CSU operates with a balanced annual budget that reflects the size, complexity and mission of the institution. The most recent [Operating Budget](#), [Financial Transparency Report](#), [Budget Data Book](#), and Annual Financial Accountability Report are attached as evidence for review.

The University's academic programs are primarily funded by two sources: state support and student tuition/fees. State support comes in the form of 1) Colorado Opportunity Fund stipends that are distributed to all Colorado resident college students and then paid out to the University and 2) revenue generated from a Fee For Service by which the University provides graduate education services, Professional Veterinary Medicine programs, and services to the citizens of the state from the CSU agencies that include CSU Extension, the Agricultural Experiment Stations and the Colorado State Forest Service. A small subset of University operations, including the Lory Student Center, Housing and Dining Services and CSU Online are self-supporting auxiliary enterprises funded through fees assessed to users of those services.

Since FY10, CSU state support has decreased by 5.4% resulting in greater reliance on tuition. [Tuition increases](#) have, for the past three years, averaged 5.16% for resident undergraduates and 3.67% for nonresident undergraduates. The average net tuition rate is growing at a reasonable rate and is currently approximately \$12.5K. The institution shares tuition back with colleges based on growth in undergraduate student credit hours and majors. This model has been updated since the last reaffirmation visit. The amount of tuition shared in FY13 was a little under \$1M, while in FY18 the amount was over \$3.6M.

CSU employs a Differential Tuition program, whereby students are charged differing tuition amounts based upon the course prefixes in which they are enrolled beginning in the junior year (with the exception of the College of Business). The revenue through this program is generally provided back to the units teaching the courses, with only a minor amount being retained centrally for campus-wide academic initiatives. Revenue from this source of funding has grown from a little over \$7.0M in FY12 to approximately \$25M in FY18.

Mandatory [student fees](#) have increased by 15% over the past three years. Student fees are reviewed and approved by various student boards and assessed to all students as a condition of enrollment. They are used for academic and non-academic purposes including, but not limited to: funding registered student organizations and student government; intercollegiate and intramural athletics; student health services; technology; mass transit; parking; building/remodel projects; and bond payments for which fees have been pledged.

CSU Online, is a cash funded enterprise and therefore not supported by state general funds. Revenue generated through CSU Online has grown from approximately \$18.5M to over \$37M in the past 10 years. Similar to differential tuition, revenue is generally distributed back to academic units with a minor percentage retained centrally.

CSU is raising 400% as much in private support as 10 years ago, an amount that now nearly doubles the amount of state support received. In FY16, CSU raised \$197.8 million in annual fundraising and set records for both academic (\$166 million) and athletics (\$31.8 million) fundraising. The \$1 billion "State Your Purpose" campaign is expected to be completed by 2020 to mark the 150th birthday of the University. FY16 saw 29 gifts of \$1 million or more, an increase of more than 4,000 donors, and an all-time high alumni participation rate of 10.7%.

The CSU Foundation was incorporated in 1970 for the following purposes: (a) to assist in the promotion, development, and enhancement of the facilities and educational programs and

opportunities of the faculty, students, and alumni of Colorado State University and (b) to receive, manage, and invest contributions, gifts, and bequests and apply the principal or income generated therefrom exclusively for charitable, scientific, literary, or educational purposes that will directly or indirectly aid and benefit the University. In FY17, the Foundation had \$493,163,000 in invested assets with a 13% rate of return.

As reported in [IPEDS](#), institutional expenditures reflect a focus on academics; 32% to instruction and academic support and 18% to research. Only 5% of expenditures are allocated to administrative services. Academic colleges receive the largest share of University funding each year, even though the money often is first allocated through an administrative office. For example, all of the funding for start-ups that goes to the Office of the Vice President for Research is spent within the colleges. Additional examples of line items that clearly and directly benefit students and the academic mission of the University but are not directly allocated to the colleges include financial aid, new faculty lines, The Institute for Teaching and Learning, Academic Computing and Networking Services, graduate student tuition/stipends and the Collaborative for Student Achievement.

Additional evidence of mission and budget alignment is the prioritization of critical initiatives through multi-year financial commitments. High-profile examples of this since the last comprehensive visit include increases in need-based financial aid, the build-out of the Academic Success Coordinators as part of the Student Success Initiative and capital construction projects to improve spaces used for both learning and research. Recently, as part of a Lumina Grant, CSU completed a return on investment analysis that indicates that the increases in retention and persistence resulting from the SSI resulted in an impressive ROI in the neighborhood of \$30M.

### Human Resources

CSU recognizes maintaining an adequate number of faculty/staff is important to maintaining academic program quality. As the number of students has increased, so has the number of employees. In the colleges, the employee count has increased by 38% in the past five years; administration has grown by just 15% in the same time. Trends in employee counts are available in the [Fact Book](#).

Goal 7 of the [Strategic Plan](#) calls for increasing the number of tenured/track-track faculty (TTF), attending to issues of non-TTF, increasing diversity, improving work-life benefits, providing competitive salaries, and focusing on equity between subgroups of employees.

Currently, as shown in the [Common Data Set](#), the institution is at an 18:1 student:faculty ratio with about 30% of course sections at enrollments of 20 students or less. In FY17, there were 6,700 faculty/staff FTE; 27% were instructional staff (1,782 FTE). Since the last comprehensive review, an average of 67 new faculty have been appointed each year resulting in an annual net gain over attrition. While the majority of those new appointments are assistant professors, a dozen or so each year are at a higher rank. [Retention rates for TTF](#) to the 7th year is 81% overall; 80% for racially minoritized faculty and 74% for female faculty. The average time to promotion for assistant professors is 5.5 years. TTF appointments, retention, status and time to promotion are available online for public review.

The institution continues to rely heavily on non-TTF. In FY17, 41% of undergraduate SCH were taught by NTTF as were 17% of graduate SCH. To increase consistency year to year, the institution highly encourages multi-year contracts for non-TTF and, as described in Criterion 3, new ranks were recently adopted for non-TTF to provide a promotional ladder. The largest concentration of non-TTF is in the College of Liberal Arts in departments that deliver significant amounts of the AUCC instruction (English, Communication Studies etc.). [Student credit hours by faculty appointment](#) are attached for review.

The institution recognizes the multitude of benefits to campus that diversity in our employee composition brings. As recognized by the review team in 2013, although CSU now employs more racially minoritized employees than in years past, the percentage of the total has been relatively static at about 15%. The institution continues to work to create a campus climate that embraces diversity (see Criterion 1.C.1 and 1.C.2). The Office of Equal Opportunity conducts regular affirmative action utilization and placement analyses for both [faculty](#) and [staff](#).

Work-life benefits for employees are critical to not only their retention but also to performance. CSU's [Commitment to Campus](#) encompasses a wide range of programs, discounts and special benefits available to CSU faculty/staff.

In addition to the [Commitment to Campus](#), the [Employee Assistance Program](#) assists employees and members of their households with personal issues through no-cost counseling services as well as legal and financial planning resources. To further encourage work-life balance, relaxation pods, reflection rooms and lactation rooms are now located across campus.

In 2017, Off-Campus Life partnered with [Neighbor to Neighbor](#) (N2N), a non-profit housing resource, to provide housing counseling services to CSU faculty/staff in the areas of Rental Housing Search Assistance, HomeShare (a matching service between renters and homeowners), Emergency Rent Assistance and First Month's Rent Assistance. The N2N Housing Solutions Coordinator also serves as an access point for home ownership programs such Homebuyer Education, Home Purchase Advising, Foreclosure Prevention Counseling and Reverse Mortgage Counseling.

Professional development opportunities for faculty and staff are described in Criterion 3.C.4 and 5.A.4.

### Physical Infrastructure

The CSU campus consists of several properties located in Fort Collins; "Main Campus", the "South Campus" Veterinary Teaching Hospital, the "Foothills Campus" Research and Service Centers, the Agricultural Research, Development Education Center; and the "Mountain Campus" in the Poudre Canyon. Additionally, there are 4,043 acres of land for the Colorado Agricultural Experiment Stations and Colorado State Forest Service outside of Larimer County. Beyond the campus, there are seven additional locations registered with HLC. These locations are used to support distance education students as well DVM students based at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.



In an ongoing effort to expand the capabilities of the University through its physical resources, a variety of capital improvement projects have either been completed since the last comprehensive visit or are currently underway. Funding comes, as appropriate, from student fees, central funds, auxiliary funds, donors, grants and the state. A selection of projects are described below and the [facilities master plan](#) is attached for review.

- Renovations to the Animal Sciences building created labs, administrative offices, faculty and GTA offices and classrooms.
- The new Center for Agricultural Education includes laboratory, teaching, technology and office space in support of the Agricultural Education teacher licensure program.
- The redevelopment of the Aggie Village North Apartments created new student apartments and academic space. The completed project accommodates approximately 1,000 beds and primarily serves the Intercultural Connections Community, unaffiliated undergraduates and graduate students.
- The on-campus multi-purpose stadium construction was completed in 2017. It will serve as a cornerstone for CSU Athletics and a focal point uniting the campus and community. Equally, the multifaceted facility houses the new Iris and Michael Smith Alumni Center, state-of-the-art classrooms, and the Collaborative for Student Achievement, touching all students during their time in school and inviting all alumni back to campus.
- The Department of Chemistry and the Department of Biology both have new buildings with abundant classroom space and shared research space to encourage collaboration.

The Classroom Review Board (CRB) has oversight responsibility for the General Assignment (GA) classrooms (where most instruction occurs). Medium and large rooms have high fidelity audio systems including wireless microphones and larger podiums. Large rooms also have document cameras. Each room is equipped with an intercom phone to contact I.T. staff for assistance if needed. The CRB regularly monitors and analyzes classroom seating capacities.

### Technological Infrastructure

The University has invested heavily in its technological infrastructure and continues to prioritize it in goal 11 of the [University Strategic Plan](#).

The extensive changes to the academic guidance model required multiple systems implementations. See Criterion 3.D.3 for additional details.

CSU has, over the past four years, invested nearly \$4 million upgrading its main data center with Uninterruptible Power Supplies and generator backup.

The University has implemented virtual servers and storage solutions that provide hot-spare and warm-spare redundancy for all critical services. The data centers house fully redundant critical services, including an internet router, DNS and messaging collection of web servers as well as other redundant equipment. All major IT systems (student, HR, finance, and research) are redundant across both data centers, ensuring business continuity in the case of any foreseeable



circumstance from which recovery is possible. Additionally, data for the major IT systems is stored redundantly in the Cloud.

Central IT has a Windows technology group as well as a UNIX technology group with server responsibility. The University recently upgraded its server environment for administrative systems. Funding was made available in FY16 to replace the virtualization environment: servers, storage, fabrics and networking. In FY17, the tape backup system was replaced with new backup-to-disk systems.

CSU is a member of The Kuali Foundation, a higher education consortium developing a comprehensive suite of open source ERP software. CSU has adopted the Kuali Financial System and Kuali Coeus, the Foundation's research grant administration system. The campus HR system is Oracle, installed in 2002. It will require upgrading within the next five years. CSU is currently a Banner Student Information System campus; the interface to it, RAMweb, was developed and is maintained in house. However, initial plans are being made to adopt Kuali Student in the future. In 2015, CSU migrated from Blackboard to Canvas as its learning management system. Canvas includes many user-friendly tools that were not available in Blackboard. A favorite Canvas tool for students is the "what-if grades" calculator, which allows students to predict what their final grades will be by entering hypothetical grades for all ungraded assignments. Among the most useful tools for instructors are Quizzes, which automatically grades online quizzes instantly, and SpeedGrader™, which allows faculty to view and provide feedback on student assignments digitally, in one place.

The Communications Infrastructure Committee (CIC) has oversight responsibility for campus networks and networking, and the central networking group has responsibility for operations and management.

- WAN – CSU has a self-healing redundant fiber ring operating at 50Gbits/sec access to the Front Range GigaPOP (FRGP) in Denver. At the FRGP, access to commodity internet and national research networks are available along with local peering with popular providers such as Microsoft, Google and NetFlix. The FRGP is monitored and operated by University Cooperation for Atmospheric. Latency and capacity of the Internet links are monitored continuously, and bandwidth is increased as demand dictates. Current plans are to upgrade to 100Gbits/sec capacity in FY19.
- LAN – The campus backbone network is composed of 40Gbits/sec links. All major buildings have been upgraded to have dual 10Gbit/sec, with redundant links to this core. Links between communication rooms are moving to 10Gbits/sec with 1Gbit/sec links to edge devices. The University supports nearly 100,000 wired and wireless devices across its campuses.
- NSF Cyberinfrastructure– The campus supports a 10Gbit/sec Research Network with dedicated access to the FRGP. This network houses systems to support High Performance Computing and the transfer of large data sets.
- Wireless – Wireless access points have been upgraded to the latest technology and expanded coverage to meet demand.

A team of experts oversee IT security including default deny firewalling, intrusion detection, vulnerability scanning, robust anti-spam and anti-virus checking border and desktop software. CSU is Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard compliant, a noteworthy accomplishment. IT security and governance policies are updated periodically to keep up with technological advances and best practices.

Individual units are generally responsible for upgrading personal computers however, units' abilities to keep PCs up-to-date are very inconsistent. Due to the critical need to keep faculty computers updated, the Provost has deployed \$100,000/year of base budget to subsidize a match of up to 50% for tenured and tenure-track faculty computers on a 4-year refresh cycle.

CSU has a rich data environment, with more than 50 TBs of data, accessible directly via ODBC calls into the Operational Data Store (ODS). The Administrative Data Governance and Architecture Committee is responsible for the operational, procedural, and cultural aspects associated with administrative data. A major focus of the Committee is the development of a data warehouse. The institution is also beginning implementation of a new enterprise reporting tool.

**5.A.2 The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.**

CSU is governed by the Board of Governors of the CSU System and is a non-profit, state governmental entity. It does not generate financial returns for other entities (other than the CSU System office to support the operations of the Board). Contributions or support (other than membership dues) to other organizations or operations that are not a part of the University's mission must be approved by the Board.

Consistent with the state constitution, CSU manages all auxiliaries and other cash-funded operations as enterprises. Therefore, they are self-funded through charges for services. In addition to generating their own operating revenue, enterprises provide the University with flexibility to undertake capital construction projects when the state General Fund does not provide such support. The Board has final authority to approve all enterprise budgets and fees. Examples of auxiliary enterprises include the CSU Health Network, Telecommunications, Campus Recreation, Lory Student Center, Housing and Dining Services and the Division of Continuing Education.

These auxiliaries have responsibility for much of the campus infrastructure beyond the academic classrooms and research facilities. They are responsible for over 2.3M square feet of facilities. Maintaining, upgrading and building new facilities, equipment and technologies are among their highest priorities with the objective to provide an atmosphere that encourages academic achievement. Customer service and streamlined operations receive emphasis in order to promote efficiency.

**5.A.3 The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.**

The strategic planning processes of the University involve the entire CSU community. Regularly, the [University Strategic Plan](#) is refreshed to maintain focus and assure realistic goals that reflect new priorities, new environments, new opportunities, and new ideas. Each year, following the budgeting process, the budget plan is developed with reference to the resource requests arising across campus. These processes dovetail to assure that campus units know how resources will be allocated in support of express, measurable goals that support the strategic plan. The current University Strategic Plan is organized around five objectives:

- CSU will champion student success
- CSU will make a global impact and translate discoveries into products of knowledge, creative artistry, and innovation
- CSU will engage with people and communities to solve problems, share knowledge, and support progress
- CSU will be a rewarding, inspiring, productive, and inclusive community for all employees and enhance faculty as its foundation
- CSU will be accountable, sustainable, and responsible

Recent emphasis and a demonstrable commitment to accountability and public transparency of the University's finances has provided additional opportunity for all constituents to evaluate the appropriateness the University's decision-making processes. The University Strategic Plan provides evidence that these processes assure a strong relationship between mission and resources.

**5.A.4 The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.**

An overview of the qualifications of faculty and staff is previously detailed (Criterion 3.C.2) as are the professional development resources for faculty and staff (Criterion 3.C.4). In addition to utilizing position descriptions containing minimum qualifications and annual evaluation processes to establish that staff are appropriately qualified, the University supports training and professional development for all employees. In FY17, the University initiated a required supervisor training. Many staff members also hold licenses, certifications or other specialized credentials in their fields, further assuring the appropriate qualifications and currency in their positions. [Faculty credentials](#) are available online for public viewing.

**5.A.5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.**

Budgeting Process

CSU has a well-established [budget process](#) that annually engages the entire campus. The President has appointed the Provost/EVP and the Vice President for University Operations to guide the process. Budget updates and related communications are regularly sent via email and posted on the Office of President's website.

1. The budgeting process for each fiscal year begins in July of the previous fiscal year with initial development of a draft incremental budget that includes initial projections of new revenues and new expenses. Once the initial version of the budget is developed, the Budget Subcommittee of the President's Cabinet begins the process of engaging campus constituents to gain input and feedback. Campus constituents include the Faculty Council's Committee on Strategic and Financial Planning (CoSFP), the full Cabinet, the Council of Deans, the Associated Students of CSU, the Board, and many others. Feedback from these constituents is solicited on a periodic basis as changes to the projections occur.
2. Based upon this feedback and information from the State, the budget is refined during the fall term to reflect updated projections of F&A recovery, enrollment, state economy and budget, new initiatives, fixed cost base operations (e.g. utilities), etc.
3. In October, the process begins to focus on the magnitude of deficit/surplus and strategies to balance the budget. A budget planning tool is available to inform and encourage campus participation in budget adjustments. The Committee on Strategic and Financial Planning reviews updated drafts of the budget, and provides input into priorities and strategies. Committee membership represents all campus constituency groups and is attached for review.
4. In December, the state revenue forecast is updated, which brings sharper definition to requirements to balance the budget.
5. In January, if a favorable budget picture is expected, budget hearings are held and proposals are presented from colleges/divisions for incremental changes in the total budget. If the budget is expected to be flat, then budget hearings may default to open fora where budget parameters are exposed and priorities for any reallocations are discussed.
6. Continued refinement of the incremental budget occurs through March, taking into consideration updated enrollment forecasts, feasibility of tuition increases, state revenue and budget forecasts, new initiatives, feedback from the budget hearings, etc.
7. In March, final budget presentations are disclosed to the campus community through an open public forum.
8. In May, after approval of the Long Bill (the major state appropriations bill) by the legislature and Governor, the final budget is considered by the Board for approval for the fiscal year starting July 1.
9. Regular budget updates are posted online throughout the process to help inform the campus community and other constituents.

#### Expense Monitoring Process

Incorporated within the University's financial system is a robust electronic workflow engine that allows the University to assign roles at varying value levels for transaction approval. The system also allows the University to route transactions based upon other relevant attributes, such as object codes, which can be used to identify types of items purchased, flag certain transactions and route transactions for special approvals (e.g., any expense charged to an externally sponsored project is routed through the Office of Sponsored Programs). In this way, the University effectively delegates levels of responsibility throughout the organization based upon each individual's role and level of authority. The University requires all business officers and unit leaders (Deans, VPs, etc.) to annually certify their compliance with University policies and procedures.

In addition to the above, units are required to reconcile their accounts on a monthly basis to ensure the proper recording of transactions. Campus Services, a unit within Business and Financial Services, also provides a level of oversight by monitoring units at an aggregated level. Unusual items noted during these monitoring procedures are addressed with each respective unit. Individuals within Campus Services are assigned specific units for oversight and serve as a liaison for all functions carried out within Business and Financial Services, such as Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, and financial system operations.

The University also supports an Internal Audit unit through the CSU System office. This unit is responsible for performing financial audits of all units on a rotating basis. The department of Internal Audit reports directly to the Board of Governors of the CSU System.

## Sources

---

- Budget Data Book
- Budget Process
- Commitment to Campus
- Common Data Set
- Employee Assistance Program
- Facilities Master Plan
- Fact Book
- Faculty Credentials
- Faculty Hires Promotion and Retention
- Fiscal Transparency Report
- IPEDS Finance Survey
- Moody's Rating
- Neighbor To Neighbor
- OEO Affirmative Action Faculty Analysis
- OEO Affirmative Action Staff Analysis
- Operating Budget
- SCH by Faculty Type
- Tuition & Fee History
- University Strategic Plan

## 5.B - Core Component 5.B

---

The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight of the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

2. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.
3. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

## Argument

---

**5.B.1 The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight of the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.**

See Criterion 2.B.

**5.B.2 The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.**

CSU is a community dedicated to higher learning in which all members share in the pursuit of knowledge, development of students, and protection of essential conditions conducive for learning. The [institution's values](#) (adopted to support the mission) and [Principles of Community](#) guide its shared governance activities.

The institution defines [shared governance](#) as "a system designed to give a voice to employees and engage the entire University community through direct and representative participation in planning and decision making processes. This system ensures all members of the University community have a seat at the table." Employees participate in shared governance activities by serving on their respective employee councils (faculty, administrative professional or classified personnel), voting in elections, attending meetings and events, and serving on committees (e.g. Benefits, Strategic & Financial Planning, Employee Appreciation, Parking Services, Physical Development, Diversity Assessment, Safety Assessment, hiring search committees, etc.). The membership of each committee is reviewed annually and the committees have authority to name additional ex officio or associate members and to organize subcommittees for specific tasks. In addition, departments and colleges have organizational policies and procedures for decision-making on academic issues that feed into the University processes.

Students are also involved in shared governance and are represented by the Associated Students of Colorado State University (ASCSU). The ASCSU Senate is composed of elected representatives from all eight colleges, open option students, representatives of the Student Diversity Program and Services offices and graduate students. The Student Fee Review Board (SFRB), part of ASCSU, oversees the allocation of millions of dollars in student fees, including 16 different fee-funded areas on campus. SFRB acts as the student voice to the Board of Governors in consideration of fee requests to ensure that students' money is effectively and responsibly used to benefit

students. Additionally, students are often solicited to join standing committees/advisory boards such as the Provost's Advisory for Student Success.

The Board of Governors has endorsed the principles of shared governance as a means to the maintenance of a campus environment that supports teaching, learning, research/creative artistry, and service. To function effectively and efficiently, shared governance requires free and open exchange in the discussion, debate, criticism, and challenging of current and proposed campus policies and procedures. In furtherance of this commitment, the Board has approved policies and procedures concerning [academic freedom and shared governance](#) as incorporated into the Faculty and Administrative Handbook as well as the Student Handbook. The Board retains the authority for final approval of any revisions to those policies and procedures.

### **5.B.3 Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.**

As previously described in Criterion 3 and 4, learning outcomes for general education and disciplines are the domain of faculty and [institutional learning outcomes](#) are currently in development. Contact hour requirements for student credit hours are set by the CDHE and monitored through the [University Curriculum Committee](#) and the Office of the Registrar.

Policy-making is a University-wide activity that is conducted within a structured Policy Development Process. The Office of Policy and Compliance (OPC) manages the University's administrative, human resource and other non-academic policies founded on a shared-governance model. Policy development requires consultation with individuals from all parts of the University (administrators, business managers, vice presidents, deans, University Counsel, etc.) to understand potential impacts and to consider input from a variety of perspectives. The Office of the General Counsel (OGC) is also directly involved in the policy development process. Upon completion of the drafting and editing process, the proposed policy is ready for President's Cabinet review. The Cabinet evaluates the proposed policy and may make a recommendation to the President for final action. Final action resides with the University President.

Just as Colorado State has grown and matured from a rural agricultural college into a major research university, shared governance has matured from its earliest form into the robust representative employee councils and student senate (ASCSU) on campus today. [“A huge part of shared governance is building community,” said Chair of the Administrative Professional Council in 2015. “If we come together and see the bigger picture, we can bridge ideas and share feedback and input about how things could be enhanced at CSU.”](#)

## **Sources**

---

- ILO Recommendations
- Institutional Mission
- Policy 311 CSUS Board Academic Freedom Policy
- Principles of Community Statement
- Shared Governance



- Shared Governance 2
- UCC Responsibilities & Procedures

## 5.C - Core Component 5.C

---

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.
5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

### Argument

---

#### **5.C 1 The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.**

See Component 1.A.3.

#### **5.C.2 The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.**

The program review process emphasizes the assessment of student learning but also requires an evaluation of departmental operations, planning and budgeting to intentionally link each of those processes (see Criterion 4.A.1). Additionally, department plans will be linked to institutional planning in the Campus Labs Compliance Assist Module beginning in FY19. At the end of the program review cycle, the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President selects, through an [RFP process](#), departments to receive a mini-grant as start-up funds to begin an initiative that could have a significant impact on strengthening program quality, expanding student access and success or producing benefit that is transferable to other programs across the institution. The proposal is fortified if it includes a cost-sharing component funded by the college thereby linking it to the planning and budgeting process.

The Student Success Initiative ([SSI](#)) is a highly visible example of the link between student learning and institutional operations, planning and budgeting. As of June 2017, \$12.2 million had been invested in the SSI since 2006. Strategies that were funded include structured first-year learning communities, first-year course offerings, high impact practices throughout the curriculum, Academic Success Coordinators and the creation of The Institute for Learning and Teaching (TILT) which is now home to tutoring, undergraduate research and curricular

design/redesign efforts. SSI funding continued during the Great Recession demonstrating the institution's prioritization of student learning and student success in its planning and budgeting process.

As further evidence of that prioritization, [SSI-2](#) is central to the strategic planning and budgeting processes. The strategies of SSI-2 will focus heavily on increasing faculty involvement in student success and further leveraging the expertise in the Division of Student Affairs, especially as it relates to student development and inclusivity. Examples of strategies that have been recommended include Departmental Action Teams, Early Performance Feedback, further integration of high impact practices throughout the curriculum, inclusive pedagogy, and developing student identity within the major. Funding for SSI-2 will, like SSI, be central to the budget process each year.

### **5.C.3 The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.**

The [University Strategic Plan](#) outlines the institution's major priorities and the outcomes against which performance will be measured. The University's three-year planning cycle is designed to leverage the shared governance processes on campus and to involve external constituents as appropriate. Detailed examples of such activity related to diversity/inclusion, facilities, and long-term planning follow.

#### Diversity and Inclusion

CSU students, staff and faculty rallied on the steps of the Administration Building on Nov. 16, 2015, and delivered a list of [recommendations](#) to Dr. Frank on how to improve support of diverse populations. In 2016, his leadership team focused on responding to the ideas brought forward that day – recommendations related to institutional planning, hiring, curriculum, athletics, student support, and governance. That input was not only considered, but was acted upon in significant ways in both planning and budgeting:

- The [Commission for Diversity and Inclusion](#) (CDI) was created to oversee the development and implementation of a strategic diversity plan. In 2018, through a shared governance process, the [Diversity Strategic Plan](#) was finalized.
- Colorado State agreed to make the Educational Advisory Board national “best practices” report its hiring and recruitment template. This report outlines effective strategies for increasing faculty diversity based on extensive national data, with specific information on universities that have achieved faculty diversity rates that outpace their peers.
- The University is exploring developing funding for areas of research that align with the work of many diverse faculty members.
- In the first year of a multi-year funding request, the University approved funds to invest in Student Diversity Programs and Services (SDPS). Additionally, the Counseling Center hired a psychologist whose specialty is working with racial battle fatigue for students of color on predominantly white campuses. This position works closely with the SDPS offices.

- The Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs, working with Faculty Council, is considering changes to the AUCC to more deeply embed issues of diversity in each of the general education categories.
- The Associate Students of CSU passed a bill in spring 2016 allocating nine senator seats and nine associate senator seats to representatives for the SDPS offices, International Programs and Services, and the Adult Learner and Veterans Services Office. The bill also leaves the door open for other student organizations representing historically underrepresented group to petition for a seat in the student senate. Subsequently, a seat was created through this mechanism to represent diverse religious organizations.
- Athletic Director Joe Parker is taking the lead on prioritizing culture and diversity within the Athletics department and engaging more coaches in the process. With the leadership of Dr. Albert Bimper, the department reconvened the Athletics Diversity Council as a working group to improve the University's assessment of student-athletes' readiness and identify key areas of investment to improve student learning.

### Facilities

Because the campus is utilized by the CSU community as well the public, input into facilities planning is inclusive of many voices. Recent examples include the planning and construction of the on-campus multi-use on-campus stadium, creating a more inclusive physical campus and the partnership to redevelop the National Western Center.

Multi-Use On-Campus Stadium: In February of 2012, a Stadium Advisory Committee was formed to review the feasibility of a new, on-campus multiple-purpose stadium. The Committee heard school, alumni and community input. In addition, sub-committees were formed to explore specific topics in great depth (over twenty-five sub-committee meetings were held). In the first half of 2013, the University and its consultants engaged in further study based upon the findings of the Feasibility Study. In August of 2013, the Design Phase commenced and incorporated campus and community feedback related to design, noise, traffic, location, and security. On December 5, 2014, CSU President, Tony Frank, presented the project for approval to the University's Board of Governors. The project passed with an 8-0 vote. The exploratory, planning and construction phases of the project were lengthy but necessary to involve so many voices. The stadium opened in fall 2017, having been completed on time and under budget.

Inclusive Campus: Creating a more inclusive physical and virtual campus involved input from a diverse tapestry of campus and the community members. For example, all-gender restrooms are now located across campus, additional curb cuts were constructed to ensure wheelchair access was more convenient than before, designated reflection rooms and lactation rooms were created, Universal Design concepts are now considered in all new construction or renovation and the Inclusive Physical and Virtual Campus Policy was created.

National Western Complex: Colorado State University is one of five partners — including the City and County of Denver, the Denver Museum of Nature & Science, History Colorado, and the National Western Stock Show — that have come together to create a shared vision for the future of the National Western Complex as part of the Mayor's North Denver Cornerstone Collaborative Initiative. As a founding partner of the planned transformation, CSU has worked since 2013

alongside the other partners to plan the site's transformation. The master plan, which provides a guide to the vision of the future site, was developed with public involvement and adopted by Denver City Council in March 2015. The project, a redevelopment – and doubling – of the current National Western Stock Show site, will expand the focus and footprint of the North Denver complex significantly. The 250-acre, \$1.1 billion National Western Center will convert the historic site into a year-round destination for entertainment, research and educational opportunities, and agricultural business innovation and incubation. CSU's role in this project brings the university's expertise to the forefront and serves our land-grant mission. Further it provides CSU with an opportunity to shape the future education throughout Colorado as well as research and innovation worldwide around pressing global issues such as water, food systems, environmental sustainability and health.

### Long-Term Planning

During the annual President's Fall Address and University Picnic in 2015, in front of nearly 4,000 students, faculty, staff and community leaders, Dr. Frank provided the framework for an initiative to prepare the University for the next 150 years. The "[Re-Envision Colorado State](#)" initiative is being led by the employee councils and ASCSU with the involvement and support of the Provost, VP for Operations, President's Office and External Relations. This leadership team has engaged the CSU Center for Public Deliberation to help guide the campus discussion and solicit ideas from across the campus community.

Re-Envision Colorado State is taking place in three phases:

- Phase One: Discovery and Listening – through September 2016
- Phase Two: Reflection, Analysis, Prioritization – September through November 2016
- Phase Three: Planning, Budgeting and Implementation – November 2016 and Beyond

CSU received hundreds of ideas from members of the campus community and public on how to move CSU forward. They were collected through an online form, a booth on the Plaza and at key campus events throughout the spring and summer. Ideas also have been generated through more focused discussions with small, targeted groups such as employee councils and within divisions. Evidence of that activity is attached for review. Phase Three is well underway and will be integrated into the strategic plan refresh to be completed in FY19.

Each of these examples (diversity/inclusion, facilities and long-term planning) required significant prioritization in the budget process and each considered the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.

### **5.C.4 The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.**

The institution has created a Strategic Enrollment Management Team to continually assess the capacity of the campus including its academic programs, its support services for students, facilities, and faculty size. That team, led by the Provost and Executive Vice President, consists of

membership from the offices of the Provost, Admissions, Budgets, External Relations, International Programs, Financial Aid, and the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness. Together, they work to "right size" the institution and to create a student composition that enhances the learning environment and stays true to the land-grant mission of CSU. Under the guidance of this group, enrollment has increased to record highs as has student diversity which has enriched the learning environment.

CSU takes a conservative approach to budgeting to ensure fiscal stability even in years in which state support declines. Projected increases in enrollment revenue are not included in base budget projections. Revenues from enrollment growth are held in reserve and used as one-time funds until the following year, when currently enrolled students are forecasted to return. There are also "cushions" built into the tuition revenue projections each year through the exclusion of individual student credit hours in excess of 21. In addition, there are established base reserves (available each fiscal year) for certain revenue and expenditure items that impact the University. Such reserves have been established for enrollment, controlled maintenance, financial aid, sustainable energy projects, and Presidential/Provost programmatic initiatives (see Criterion 5.A.1 and 5.C.3 for examples). In the event the University was to experience a significant unplanned event, whether a shortfall in a particular revenue source or a large expenditure, these reserves could be combined to compensate for such an event.

#### **5.C.5 Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.**

CSU's planning process is dynamic. It expects and is designed to accommodate emerging factors and new opportunities. Examples include the adoption of technological advances, becoming the new academic home for Semester at Sea, and anticipating the needs of a changing population demographic in Colorado.

##### Technological Advances

In 2013, CSU was awarded a Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation grant to address integrated planning and advising services ([IPAS](#)). The project duration was two years and the award amount was \$100,000. Under the grant's auspices, CSU worked with multiple vendors to implement new technologies that would better support students and advisers. At the successful conclusion of that grant in 2015, EDUCAUSE awarded the institution a related grant to further integrate the technologies. That award duration was three years and the amount was \$225,000. Both of these grant awards exemplify opportunities that arose outside of the institution's planning processes and were embraced to further the institutional mission. Combined, the awards were significant, but not enough to fully implement the projects. The institution subsidized the projects in order to reap the full benefit of the emerging technologies.

In 2017, Colorado State University was one of seven public universities selected to receive a three-year, \$515,000 [grant](#) from the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities to expand the use of adaptive courseware in undergraduate classes to improve student success. These new types of digital learning systems are expected to have the greatest impact in problem-based, STEM classes.

In FY14, CSU became a founding member of [Unizin](#), a consortium of institutions of higher education working to influence educational technologies. As part of this membership, CSU adopted [Canvas](#) as its learning management system (LMS). The decision was made after careful consideration of the capabilities within the tool and the shortcomings of the previous LMS (Blackboard). The adoption was well received and faculty feedback has been positive.

### Semester at Sea

In 2015, CSU announced it would be the new academic home for [Semester at Sea](#). The first voyage set sail in 2016. A shared commitment to student achievement and innovative, globally engaged education makes the partnership an exciting opportunity. Since partnering, 1,628 students have expanded their international experience with a Semester at Sea voyage. Again, this partnership was not present in strategic planning prior to when it was created. It is another example of a dynamic planning process that successfully leverages opportunities as they come.

### Changing Demographics

The population demographic is becoming increasingly diverse in Colorado and across the country. CSU strives to mirror state demographics and provide access to any student with the talent and motivation to succeed. CSU currently fall short of this goal. As detailed in the [University Strategic Plan](#), there are many initiatives aimed at increasing campus diversity and providing the support necessary for diverse students, faculty and staff to feel welcome and valued as members of the campus community. As discussed in Criterion 5.C.3, many changes have already been made.

## **Sources**

---

- Adaptive Courseware Grant
- Canvas Contract
- Commission on Diversity and Inclusion Mission
- CSU Stadium Project Review
- Diversity Blueprint
- Inclusive Physical and Virtual Campus Policy
- IPASS Grant Agreement
- National Western Center Partnership
- Re-Envisioning CSU (Fall Address)
- RFP Email FY18
- Semester at Sea Affiliation Agreement
- SSI Final Report
- SSI-2 Plan
- Student Recommendations on Diversity
- University Strategic Plan
- Unizin Agreement



## 5.D - Core Component 5.D

---

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.
2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

### Argument

---

#### 5.D.1 The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.

The Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness is a service office for the University Community. As part of its mission to support strategic planning activities and continuous quality improvement at the institution, it [documents institutional performance](#) across a variety of metrics related to virtually all facets of CSU operations. The office maintains data extracts related to students, courses, revenue/expenditures, human resources, etc. From those extracts a multitude of internal reports are produced and made available to campus (either online or upon request). The office is also responsible for documenting performance in mandatory state/federal reporting, the academic program review process and in accreditation submissions. [Additionally, the office completes roughly 400 ad hoc requests per year that inform discussions and decision-making on campus.](#) Most of those requests assess the efficacy of programs or interventions and many are published online in the form of research briefs.

As discussed in Criterion 4, the institution participates in a variety of assessments to document performance toward campus goals. The [Campus Climate Survey](#) includes a set of core questions that allow for documentation of changes over time. Similarly, the [National Survey of Student Engagement](#) (NSSE) and the [Collegiate Learning Assessment Plus](#) (CLA+) allow for the documentation of performance trends over time.

More than 40 of the institution's academic and non-academic programs maintain certification and/or accreditation of evidence of performance that exemplifies best practices (see Criterion 4.A.5).

Annually, CSU submits data for use in a variety of rankings. Those rankings are tracked and reviewed each year; providing additional evidence of efforts to document performance. Since 2012, CSU has risen nine spots to 58th among public universities in the U.S. News rankings. CSU is the first university in the world to receive a S.T.A.R.S. Platinum rating for sustainability, has been recognized by the Sierra Club, and ranked the top most sustainable university in *Best Colleges'* annual rankings.



### **5.D.2 The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.**

Through ongoing assessment of operational practices, CSU is able to improve upon past performance and increase efficiency, effectiveness, capacity and sustainability.

The Student Success Initiatives ([SSI](#) and [SSI-2](#)) are salient examples of how CSU learns from its experiences to improve its effectiveness. Changes are evident across the institution within the curricular and co-curricular student experiences. Increased [graduation rates](#) and increased efficiency to graduation are byproducts of the effort to more fully engage students in their learning. The strategies within SSI and SSI-2 have been extensively assessed for impact and tweaked to their current iterations in response. Examples include the creation and modification of learning communities, faculty professional development in inclusive pedagogy, design and use of flipped classrooms, self-serve degree audits, curricular maps for on-time graduation, a re-imagining of academic guidance, use of learning analytics and adaptive courseware, etc. Both the current assurance argument and the 2014 argument have SSI and SSI-2 prominently woven throughout because of the significant transformations they have created at both structurally and culturally.

Administrative operations are also improved as issues are identified. Examples can be seen across campus:

- Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness: As noted by the review team during the last HLC comprehensive visit, the program review process was undergoing significant revision to better accommodate a focus on improvement and to create a more sustainable process. At the same time, the activities of assessment, accreditation, program review, and strategic planning were becoming increasingly interdependent. Recognizing this convergence, the office was created to bring all of these activities under one umbrella, thereby increasing the continuity and effectiveness across the spectrum of the activities. For example, the program review process now focuses more on student learning thereby integrating accountability requirements with accreditation. A new assessment website is under development, employing the Voluntary System of Accountability Framework, to overtly connect the assessment processes and resulting improvements in institutional effectiveness. That site will be publicly accessible to align with transparency efforts.
- Financial Aid: There was a multi-faceted approach to improving services for FY18 cycle based on assessment of previous years. An Access Team was created to focus intensive off-campus outreach and partnership building to assist students through the aid application process earlier than before. A Success Team was also created to assist on-campus partners and students. The result was a significantly higher number of students completing with the aid process in time for the first disbursement for the fall term; an additional \$20M was in student bank accounts than any term prior. Money in hands means they do not need to come talk to us. A two-tiered system was created in the call center that increased the number of answered calls by over 40%. More students served by phone also resulted in a decrease in walk-in traffic. The Student Eligibility team, responsible for processing

FAFSAs and verifying income information, completely redesigned the approach requesting/receiving information from students and parents. In addition to asking for less information, students were able to self-serve more easily. Every unit within the office was charged with implementing enhancements to make the financial aid process easier for students and families.

- Admissions: Recognizing a need for a more progressive approach to the admissions process, many changes were implemented to improve operations and communications. The office deployed a new application system, Slate, which helped to streamline workflow, decrease processing time, improve document management, and monitor data integrity. Additionally, the office implemented a new two-read system where files are read and recommended for a decision by the first reader and then released by the second reader. Before Slate, this process caused delays of up to two-three weeks for the admissions committee to meet on a weekly basis. Admissions decisions are now released every other day instead of weekly. Once the decision is released, it is immediately visible in the applicant portal and the applicant receives an email that evening. Applicants receive more, and more tailored, communications from the office. This includes an online tool to help newly admitted students begin to build a community at CSU even before they arrive on campus.
- Registrar's Office: This office was recognized by [EDUCAUSE](#) for its change in focus from student transactions to supporting student success.

## Sources

---

- EDUCAUSE Blog 3
- Employee Climate Survey Executive Summary
- Institutional Research Planning and Effectiveness
- IRPE Annual Report 2017
- National Survey of Student Engagement Results
- Retention Study
- Spring 2016 CLA+
- SSI Final Report
- SSI-2 Plan

## 5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

---

The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

### Summary

---

#### Assurance Evidence Summary

The evidence, both described and attached, affirm that CSU continues to comply with the requirements of Criterion 5.

The University has an effective formal planning process that is aligned with institutional mission. Internal and external constituents are engaged in the planning. Administrative and support staff, faculty, students and the public are effectively included in the planning process through committees, open meetings and less formal solicitations for input. CSU has integrated the planning process into its fiscal processes, even at a time when appropriations from the State of Colorado significantly decreased.

Updates since the last reaffirmation visit are many and include the following:

- Adjustments were made to the funding model that shares tuition back to the colleges
- The University Strategic Plan was refreshed
- The Facilities Master Plan was refreshed and many capital construction projects were completed
- A Strategic Enrollment Management Team and the Student Success Initiative (SSI-2) became increasingly focused on changing student demographics

The resources, planning and institutional effectiveness of CSU are demonstrated throughout every objective of the strategic plan.